

Catholic Church mourns as Anambra priest dies while playing tennis

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Catholic Diocese of Awka

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The Catholic Diocese of Awka, Anambra State, has expressed its deep sadness over the passing of one of its priests, Reverend Father Anthony Udogu.

Udogu died while playing lawn tennis during his routine exercise in the early hours on Monday.


The deceased, until his death, was the Parish Priest of St. Francis Parish, Awka and Dean of Awka II Deanery.

He was also said to be a lecturer at the Department of Criminology and Security Studies at the Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University.

He was born on December 24, 1964, was ordained on August 19, 1995, and died on May 19, 2025.

The news of his death was disclosed in a short press statement released on Tuesday by the Diocesan Chancellor, Diocesan Catholic Secretariat, Awka, Rev. Fr. Charles Ndubisi.

The statement read, “With faith in the resurrection of the dead, the Catholic Diocese of Awka announces the demise of our brother priest, Rev. Fr. Anthony Nnaemeka Udogu, whose sudden death occurred at the early hours of today(Monday) May 19.



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“He slumped while playing lawn tennis and was quickly rushed to the nearby hospital.

“All efforts to save his life proved abortive. Until his demise, he was the Parish Priest of St. Francis Parish Awka and Dean of Awka II Deanery.”

He said the Catholic Diocese of Awka condoled with the family, parishioners and all those who mourned his death.

“Please note that the funeral arrangements will be announced soon. May the soul of Rev. Fr. Anthony Nnaemeka Udogu rest in the bosom of the Lord, Amen,” the statement added.

Our correspondent, who visited the St. Francis Parish, Awka, on Tuesday evening, observed that activities were on a low-key as members of the parish were seen in a mourning mood, discussing in hushed tones.

Although no priest was available to make further comments on the development, the few parishioners who spoke to our correspondent paid glowing tributes to the deceased, describing his passing as “too sudden and painful.”

One said, “He served the Church for nearly 30 years and was well regarded for his devotion, humility, and commitment to pastoral duties.”