

## ...farewell my brother Fr. John Ekwueme!

You are not dead! You had never accepted to die. When you visited me before I travelled for my annual holidays, you told me about your illness and how you had been trying to cope amidst a thicket of new challenges in your new area of pastoral assignment. You were optimistic that the results of the tests would not reveal any terminal illness. I quickly googled the case you presented and my finding shocked me to the marrow because it was actually what you did not want to hear. I did not want to play the doctor by revealing the ugly face of my discovery. I also knew that faith could move mountains and so allowed you to continue your normal treatment with the hope that prayer could change the dark clouds of my finding into something more acceptable to the human spirit. But today the story has turned out differently for reasons best known to the Lord, the giver of life.

This afternoon you appeared to me in my dream. I screamed and said: I thought you had died. In your usual calmness you told me you had not died. You were very calm. But for your face which had few blisters and was a little swollen, one wouldn't suspect that anything was wrong with you. But I hear your voice time and again as I write this farewell: "I'm not dead." And I believe you!

Fr John, you have not died. In life here and hereafter you rejected the word 'death', holding unbendingly tenaciously to our faith that life does not end, rather is merely changed. This faith alone will give you the rewards of eternal life.

It is indeed painful that we cannot see you with our physical eyes anymore. But you will continue to live on the wings of our time-tested faith, which is stronger than any material rock or metal. You have expressed a strong faith in life, so may God who blesses our unflinching faith bless you and receive you into the family of all advocates of life and in his throne of life, which is our collective hope and goal.

Finally, with teary eyes and shaking hands, I say farewell! The prayers of Godfrey Okoye University Group of Institutions will accompany you on your journey of eternal life. GO in peace my brother! Der Friede sei mit dir!

Rev. Fr. Prof. Christian Anieke  
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