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Fr. Ferdinand Fanen Ngugban and six others died of gunshot wounds after armed gunmen invaded the grounds of St. Paul Parish in Ayetwar March 30, said the Diocese of Katsina-Ala.

"After celebrating Mass and while he prepared to leave for the chrism Mass at St. Gerald Majella Catholic Cathedral, Katsina-Ala, to renew his priestly vows alongside his brother priests, there was pandemonium among the internally displaced persons who took refuge in the parish premises," said a statement from the diocese.

"Father Ferdinand went out to find out the cause of the confusion. He was shot in the head as he tried to take cover after sighting some armed gunmen," the diocese said. It said burial arrangements for all the deceased would be announced.

Ngugban, who served as assistant pastor at St. Paul Parish, was ordained a priest in 2015.

The attack took place in Benue state. The gunmen reportedly raided the village and set houses on fire before attacking the parish.

Although police did not immediately say who was responsible, Gov. Samuel Ortom promised to pursue justice. Nine days earlier, Ortom's convoy was attacked while traveling through the state.

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