

Fr. Joseph Tormo: From Nigeria to Heaven

Fr. Joseph Tormo, a priest of Opus Dei, died on Monday 5 January 2026 at the age of 73. Fr. Joseph came to Nigeria from Spain 40 years ago, at the age of 33, just six years after his ordination, to serve the people and the Church through his priestly ministry. He gave himself fully to his pastoral work. Nigeria for him, was not just a place of assignment, but his home.

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He was the first priest of the Iroto Conference Centre, where he lived as the resident priest, preacher and confessor, first from 1986 to 1994, and then from 2014 to 2024. At Iroto, he preached countless retreats and heard an uncountable number of confessions. Fr. Joseph also spent several years in Enugu (1994 to 2004), and before returning to Iroto Conference Centre for the second time, he spent 2008 to 2014 helping out in various capacities in Lagos.

Since the news of his passing came, everyone has been deeply moved, remembering his very exemplary life. Those who knew him recall his ability to speak always in a positive way and to provide encouragement. Fr. Joseph was always gently nudging those who went to him for spiritual

direction forward towards God. People loved speaking with him and going to him for spiritual direction and confession. This was because he brought them so much peace, had a knack for dispersing whatever worries they had, and always encouraged them to a renewed struggle to look for holiness in daily life. While at the Iroto Conference Centre, Fr. Joseph preached many spiritual retreats and workshops for thousands of men and women, all of whom appreciated the help he gave them to improve their Christian lives as well as their knowledge of Catholic doctrine.

His family members here in Nigeria, as well as his friends, remember Fr. Joseph's enjoyment of very spicy meals. He was very good with his hands and possessed exceptional skills with fixing things, gold-plating, working on silverware, as well as on tabernacles, chalices and other

delicate materials used for divine worship. He was always ready to teach others what he knew how to do, such as the binding of books, creating artistic picture frames and even making rosaries.

Fr. Joseph was a very serene and happy person. He was always very cheerful and perpetually good-humoured. He always made people smile and would always be seen with a rosary in his hand, praying it at every spare moment.

Many recall some of his expressions, such as asking people who were preparing for exams, “Where is the cat?”, or his knack for asking questions like “Any other thing?”, “Hope you are happy”. Another expression very common on his lips was “thank you very much”.

He died in his sleep on Monday, 5 January 2026, on a short medical trip to Spain. Fr. Joseph lay in state in a

chapel of the University of Navarra Hospital from 4:00 to 9:00 pm local time on Monday, and also on Tuesday, 6 January, from 9:00 am to 10:00 am local time.

He was buried on Tuesday, 6 January 2026, in Pamplona. The funeral Mass for Fr. Joseph was celebrated by Fr. Carlos Garcia del Barrio, the Vicar of Opus Dei in Pamplona, who was joined by four other priests of the Prelature as concelebrants. More than 160 Nigerians were able to connect and follow the Mass via live streaming (link below).

Fr. Joseph was buried in a private vault in the cemetery in Pamplona, resting alongside many other faithful of Opus Dei.

Fr. Joseph wanted to return to Nigeria, his homeland, after his short visit to Spain, because he felt a deep sense of belonging to this land and to his spiritual family. However, God

has foreseen otherwise. Omnia in bonum! Forty years in Nigeria have prepared Fr. Joseph for heaven. Please pray for the repose of his soul.

YouTube link of the Mass:

Santa Misa Funeral Fr. Joseph Tormo – Clínica Universidad de Navarra –
<https://www.youtube.com/live/OpnbJBqfESk>

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