Tragic Death of Nigerian Nun Inspires Medical Clinic Plan
Sr. Calista Utazi, MOJ to be honored posthumously on October 13th in Bronzeville

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CHICAGO, October 7, 2016 – On Thursday, October 13th, Home To Enhance African Life (HEAL) will host its 3rd Annual Benefit at Room 43 in Bronzeville from 6-10pm. The event will pay tribute to Rev. Sr. Calista Utazi of the Messengers of Justice Congregation (MOJ), who died at age 39 in southeastern Nigeria due to lack of available medical care for her heart condition.

She will be honored posthumously with the “Kenosis Award” for self-emptying service after the example of Jesus Christ (cf. Phil 2:6-11) and the plan to establish a medical clinic in her name will be announced. The Sr. Calista Utazi Memorial Medical Clinic will serve poor and marginalized orphans, widows, and rural villagers in southeastern Nigeria irrespective of ability to pay.

Sr. Calista joined the MOJ because of their dedication to uplifting orphans, who she could empathize with due to her own hardship as an orphan. Her skill as a seamstress greatly blessed the community and the mission as she designed and sewed the religious habits for her fellow sisters and the school uniforms and plain clothes of the poor orphans and village children they served.

One day in July, Sr. Calista complained to the founder of the MOJ, Deacon Leo Okonkwo, that she felt very tired whenever she walked a long distance. Deacon Leo told her to admit herself to the nearby village medical clinic. She was properly diagnosed with an enlarged heart, but the small village clinic did not have the resources to treat her and looked for alternatives.

Unfortunately, hospitals in southeastern Nigeria were on strike due to salary disputes between health providers and the government. Calista was not able to be transferred to receive proper care and died of her condition on July 23rd. Join us on October 13! RSVP at https://heal-2016.eventbrite.com.

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