

Sr. Bernadette Ukadike - 1952 – August 20, 2014

Sr. Bernadette Ukadike was born in the Holy Rosary Hospital, Ihiala, Nigeria in 1952 and died in Dublin, Ireland on August 20th, 2014 surrounded by Holy Rosary Sisters.

The last weeks of her life of suffering were suffused with acceptance, gratitude and an ever deeper peace as she drew close to the God she loved.

The seeds of Sr. Bernadette's religious vocation can be found in her family. Her grandmother met Bishop Shanahan and spoke of him often. Sr. Bernadette took him as her model.

Her deep concern for others and her spirit of gratitude resembled his but above all her strong sense of forgiveness no matter what hurt and rejection came her way. Hers was not an easy life right from the beginning when her colour set her apart. During her teenage years the Biafra war sensitised her to suffering of all kinds.

After her spiritual training in the novitiate in Nsukka she was sent to the university in Ireland where her intellectual abilities were honed. Her beautiful voice enriched the university choir where her understanding of music was enhanced. Over the years her students benefitted from all she had learned as she gave herself selflessly to all in her care.

Like Sr. Mary Hewson and Sr. Mary Neville before her Sr. Bernadette believed in the importance of education in all its aspects - spiritual, intellectual, moral and ethical. She was strict but fair and when aware of hidden suffering in a student's life she showed great compassion. Besides her love and concern for her students in Lourdes she always found time to visit the sick and elderly in Mankon.

During her 6 years of grave illness in Ireland she did the same. People of all kinds came to tell us of her care and compassion for them as she quietly and unobtrusively visited the lonely, the sick, the blind and those in any kind of need. Despite the heavy cross of suffering that she bore she was other-centered and always attuned to God's prompting. Never becoming bitter or revengeful no matter what happened to her. She looked for what was good and beautiful and celebrated it. Her sense of humor and affection brought joy to many and will always be a precious memory.

May her life continue to inspire us as she intercedes for us in heaven where her beautiful voice enriches the heavenly choir and her whole spirit is suffused with God's love.