News
Religious Life



Sr. Letta Mosue, left, superior general of the Sisters of St. Brigid in South Africa, and Sr. Regina Kuizon, province leader of the Religious of the Good Shepherd of Philippines-Japan, are pictured in a 2017 photo in Manila, the Philippines. Mosue died July 19. (GSR photo/Gail DeGeorge)



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Religious sisters in Africa and beyond have expressed shock and sadness at the death of Sr. Letta Mosue, who died on July 19 near Rustenburg, a populous city in the North West province of South Africa. Well-known in various sister forums, her influence also spread to interfaith groups and professional organizations in psychology and social services.

Mosue was the superior general of the Congregation of St. Brigid in the Rustenburg Diocese, South Africa. Mosue, who died at age 68, joined the convent at the age of 15. In her decades of service to the people, she was an educator, clinical psychologist and specialist in trauma counseling. She also ministered at the South African police correctional services and the University of Pretoria. She also worked in private practice and at an oncology clinic.

She had colon cancer and had gone to Italy for a conference earlier this year and became ill, said Johanri Engelbrecht, a clinical psychologist based in Johannesburg. "They then discovered the tumors, and she had emergency surgery and excellent medical care. Post operation, she recovered in the Vatican. She returned to South Africa in mid-June and had a few chemotherapy sessions."

The sisters who worked and mingled with her described her as a person with a golden heart, independent mind, and honesty, who changed the lives of people in her community and those she met during her ministries.



In this 2017 photo, Sr. Letta Mosue, in black skirt, superior general of the Sisters of St. Brigid in South Africa, and Sr. Josephine Mpatane, far left, superior general of the Sisters of Calvary in Botswana, join a dance performance by young women at the Ruhama Center for Women, a residential facility for young women rescued from trafficking and abuse run by the Religious of the Good Shepherd in Manila. (GSR photo/Gail DeGeorge)

"I have known her for many years. I, fortunately, visited her last month after her return from Rome. I must confess that I was shocked when I saw her lying in her sickbed. She looked frail but still gave me her beautiful smile," said Sr. Boitumelo Albertina Matlhabe of the Sisters of Calvary in Botswana, who is also the managing director at St. Joseph's College.

"She told me she would return to Rome in September for further medical attendance. This gave me hope that she would indeed make it through."

Matlhabe added: "She was a very strong person with an independent mind. It wasn't easy to convince her of anything she did not believe in. She was a lover of Africanism and proud of her African roots."

Sr. Nkhensani Shibambu, superior general of the congregation of Companions of St. Angela in South Africa, said Mosue had a lot of energy and was involved in so many responsibilities that she wondered how Mosue managed them all.

"She was one of my best support people when I became president of our leadership conference in South Africa," she said. "She always corrected me when I went wrong, especially in my leadership. She was a straight talker who never minced her words when convinced about something. She was always smiling and correcting at the same time."

Mosue was also active beyond Africa, bringing her insights to organizations to help build connection and communication and was committed to help build a "global sisterhood." Sr. Patricia Murray, the executive secretary of the International Union of Superiors General, or UISG, said Mosue was a blessing to the organization under her leadership of Constellation C6 Africa South (a geographically defined cluster of superiors general under the International Union of Superiors General), which covered South Africa, Lesotho, Namibia, Botswana and Eswatini (formerly known as Swaziland.)

"Her wisdom, energy and commitment to religious life was a gift that she shared widely," said Murray, a member of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary. "At a pastoral level, her accompaniment of so many people showed the compassionate and merciful face of Christ. We shall miss her for being one of the strong religious women who has made an impact not only in her nation but in the global society."

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She was also a champion of Global Sisters Report, serving as a panelist on the second year of "The Life," a regular feature in which sisters contribute their views on a variety of topics about spirituality, religious life and social and political issues.

"When I close my eyes to picture Sister Letta, I see her smile," said Sr. Michele Morek, a sister liaison for Global Sisters Report who oversees "The Life" feature. "I remember her writing about how her community of only 15 sisters were elderly and sick, but her columns that year on The Life panel were joyful — describing the ecumenical, collaborative work they were doing with other churches and other religious congregations. She was a person who empowered others until the end of

her life."

A column by Mosue for Global Sisters Report in 2020 exemplified so much about her. She wrote about gender-based violence that gripped parts of South Africa and a statement condemning the attacks issued on behalf of the UISG constellation. But she didn't let the negative have the last word, keeping the focus of the column about the joy of accompanying young people on an ecumenical Taizé pilgrimage in Cape Town.

She also often contributed to the WhatsApp group GSR Africa:Connect, helping to further conversations with her keen insights.

Video from 2017 features Sr. Letta Mosue dancing at a UISG Constellation meeting. Sisters spontaneously took to the dance floor following an evening of cultural performances by young Filipinos, during the delegates' meeting of the International Union of Superiors General in Manila. (YouTube/NCRonline)

Sr. Charity Zulu of the Benedictine Sisters of Twasana in South Africa said Mosue, who facilitated her congregation's general chapter last year, was genuine and outspoken. This character could be seen by anyone meeting her for the first time, she said. "Life is tough, we never thought Sr. Letta would be gone by now," she said. "We've learned to accept the will of God."

A memorial service held July 27 attracted participants from around the world, including many from professional organizations, psychology, as well as members of other faiths, reflecting her work in interfaith dialogue and understanding. Many spoke of her dedication to social justice causes, to the individuals she counseled, and to furthering understanding between Africans and the African diaspora, particularly in the field of psychology.

Others noted her joy, kindness and even her love of dancing. "She was an iconic person who made an impact on every person she met." said Aggie Kalungu-Banda, who led the online memorial service and a co-founder of Ubuntu Lab, a learning program for change-makers, innovators and innovators, to which Mosue was a member of the leadership team and faculty. "May the good Lord rest her soul in eternal peace."

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