

# When joy turns sorrow

•Devastated Okada rider cries for help, as wife dies after giving birth to triplets

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By **Geoffrey Anyanwu**, Enugu

The world turned upside down for 40-year-old Okada operator, Mr. Matthew Okorie, on Wednesday, April 2, when his beloved wife, Celestina, died four days after giving birth to triplets.



Okorie, who had lived with his wife for five years, having married her in 2016, was basking in the euphoria of God's gift of triplets, all boys, when the unimaginable happened, turning his joy to sorrow.

His wife, 31-year-old Celestina, before the birth that claimed her life, had a set of twin boys, who are just over two years old now, bringing the number of children to five boys.

Describing his late wife as a loving, peaceful and hardworking woman, Okorie lamented that darkness has befallen him in the daytime as he is like a fish out of water.

"I am Okorie Matthew from Amaovia village in Ugwuleshi Awgu Autonomous community in Awgu Local Government of Enugu State. I am 40 years old, an Okada rider and farmer. I leave in my village with my family," he said.

Narrating his ordeal to Daily Sun amid tears, Okorie said, "We got married in 2016 and in 2018 my wife gave birth to a set of twins, all boys, which was her first pregnancy, and that brought great joy to our home. We began to train them with the proceeds of our farm and my Okada business. We were happy and living fine as we could cope without any problem.

"In 2020, she took in again and, as the pregnancy matured, she was healthy and only complained of a little fever and was taken care of in the hospital and she was okay. However, after they established that she had three babies in the womb through ultrasound scan, on the next antenatal, it was discovered that her blood pressure (BP) had risen and they gave her drugs and at the next appointment they said she was okay.

"The doctor gave her May 10 for delivery but on April 17, she started feeling somehow and around 8pm we took her to the hospital where she was attending antenatal at Mayor but, on getting there they said the doctor was not around, we should take her to Enugu; but because of her condition at that moment, we decided to branch to a nearby hospital, Jideoffor in Awgu, where the doctor said an operation must be carried out on her immediately. I agreed to anything that would save the life of my wife and babies, especially my wife.

"The operation ended after 11pm and they called me and showed me the three babies and my wife and they were all fine and I thanked God. They asked me to go back to where I was waiting before. After sometime, they brought out the babies, kept them in one room and kept my wife in another room. I went there, called her, she answered but did not open her eyes. The next day was the same, she did not open her eyes, but was opening her mouth to take food. It was on the third day that she opened her eyes. She was given two pints of blood after the operation and on that third day when she opened her eyes they gave her another two pints of blood. In the night of that day she became restless and we called in the doctor who came and said it was normal with some given blood that she would calm down, and he gave her an injection, which calmed her down.

“On the fourth day in the morning, I called her, she answered and I told her that I would go to the house to bring some wrapper for her to change and I left. On my way returning to the hospital, my sister called me and said she had started being restless again. When I got there, I called her but she did not answer me, I held her by the hand and shoulder and began to pray. As I was praying she opened her eyes, looked up, closed her eyes again and gave up the ghost.”

He said that after consultations with her wife’s people, they decided to bury her that day, adding that, “that was how I lost my cherished, adorable wife. I am confused; I don’t know how to cope with these little kids, five of them now. How do I care for these triplets of just one week old?”

The man, therefore, has appealed to all kind-spirited individuals, government and corporate bodies to come to his aid as the sustenance of the triplets and their elder twin brothers was something he could not afford.

Begging for assistance he said, “I want to use this medium and opportunity to plead with our loving and kindhearted Governor, Hon. Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi, Gburugburu, and all individuals and corporate bodies to come to my aid to assist to see that the three babies survive and are brought up with the first two.

“I am only but a poor farmer who God has blessed with the gift of children but, unfortunately, the devil came to steal my wife away. If she had been alive, at least, we would manage; while she tends the children I would go to farm and my Okada business to bring in food, but now which one will I do? I beg the good people of our state and others outside our state to look at the situation of my children and come to our aid.”

Also appealing for support for the family, the former national publicity secretary of Awgu Town Union and publisher of Greater Awgu News, Chief Michael Ilechukwu, called on government agencies, NGOs, philanthropists, Awgu Town Youths Association, Awgu Egbeleli Development Union, Awgu Local Government chairman and the state government to show concern for the five children.