



## **This is the testimony of Ange, a survivor of the Rwandan genocide**

My name is Ange. I was eighteen at the time of genocide. I lost my mother, father, brothers and sisters and over 30 relatives.

During the genocide I hid with my friend, another girl, in an open sewer. One day, when she ran out to get some food the soldiers caught her and shot her. When I saw it happening, I screamed. I wanted nothing more than to be dead. I shouted, "kill me too." I wanted the soldiers to shoot me rather than be killed by machete.

One of them held a gun on my head but he didn't shoot. Instead, they raped me, beat me, took off all my clothes and threw me into a mass grave. My body was covered in the blood of the bodies in the grave. Many people were still alive – I saw one woman with her legs chopped off, still alive.

A man came by the grave; he saved me, kept me in a shade and raped me. He gave me food and water but only so that he could keep on raping me. He said: "It doesn't matter, you are going to die anyway."

I managed to escape when this man went on his daily routine killing spree, and met a man who was kind to me. He also used me, afraid that he would be found with a Tutsi woman. He smuggled me in a petrol drum and took me on a hired lorry to the Congo.

Besides me, of my entire family only one sister survived. She returned to my home village after genocide and was attacked again by the killers of my family, who feared that she would denounce them to the authorities. She was in a coma for months. On regaining consciousness she had lost her ability to hear and she lives with constant headaches and mental problems.



I have tried to commit suicide twice but failed to die. I live constantly in the shadow of genocide. Sometimes I imagine meeting my mother on the street. Sometimes I see people wearing similar clothes to my dead relatives. I follow them and tap them on the shoulder. I believe one day I will get a surprise when they return. I have never recovered their bodies; that is why I think that one day they will come back.

Before genocide, I was a girl. I used to dress up with my mother and feel pretty. I used to really like myself. Now people tell me I am nice, but I have no feelings about it. Sometimes I watch women walking around, being happy, and wonder why I can't be like that. Then I'd remember that I am different. It makes me feel so sad.

I miss my mother and family a lot. I wake up and wonder who killed them. Sometimes I sit and cry and cry for no reason. I remember the people who raped me and killed my family and friends. I see their faces in my dreams. They are always running after me, and, when I wake up, it's as if they are still there.

Life will never be the same again for me.

**Today's Reading of the Testimonies marks the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, in support of survivors like Ange.**