



This is the testimony of Mathilde, a survivor of the Rwandan genocide

I am in charge of a child-headed household. I look after five children. All of them are orphans of the genocide.

I was 12 years old in 1994. My parents, and most my family, were killed before my eyes. My big sister and I were raped and as a consequence, we both now have AIDS.

The great miracle is that my little sister, who was still being breastfed at the time, survived. She spent one-week breastfeeding from my mother who was dead. One of the killers passed by and saw that she was still alive. He was so astonished to see that she had survived after so many days, that he decided to take her to his home.

I am covered with scars all over her body and on my head. Sometimes my head swells because of the heat of the sun. We all try to attend school, and all of us share the domestic work, though I do the farming.

Giving this testimony is the first time since I became an orphan that I have experienced someone who has shown any care for me, comforting me and listening to me attentively. Normally, no one is interested in me or has pity for me.

When I am sick, I can't do anything. There might not even be any food at home. I need help to farm, because my garden is fertile but we do not have the resources to make full use of it. We still need help to pay for school as well.

Today's Reading of the Testimonies marks the 15th Anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, in support of survivors like Mathilde.