



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

I was in Bushenge when the genocide started. I had a very difficult time. I saw my family killed. I was still a child when many of my elders were killed.

I was lucky to have people who helped me after the genocide so I could return to school. I have God to thank. The God who convinced people to help me now is the same God who guided me and other survivors during the genocide. God did not permit the Hutus to exterminate all of the Tutsis as they had planned.

Those who lived in the interior of Rwanda tried to reach churches. Those who were lucky enough to live near the border fled to Zaire (now D.R. Congo). Those who had sought sanctuary in the churches thought they would not be attacked because in the first killing of Tutsis in 1959, no one was attacked in churches. This time was different.

In the beginning, they killed mainly the men. The women and girls were taken by *interahamwe* who did what they wanted with them. In time, many of them were killed too as the orders came through to kill all. The situation improved when the French troops arrived in town as the *interahamwe* were fleeing to Congo.

The survivors were obliged to live in the houses of those who had fled the country while they waited to return to their own houses, destroyed during the genocide. Numerous survivors were traumatized and their problems were many. I saw a Hutu who I thought was traumatized too. He had killed many Tutsis. He always had a skull in his right hand. He kept saying things without any meaning.

I learned that we cannot have faith in a man. I know priests, even a bishop, involved in the killings. Normally, I thought, they were the God's representatives on earth. Is it God that gave them that mission? Certainly not.

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