



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

At the age of just ten, I was separated from my family and left to hide in the fields near my home in Butare. A male adult found me there and raped me.

Over the days that followed, I remained constantly on the run from the gangs of killers I saw roaming around. Later, whilst sheltering in a swamp, I was discovered by another man who also raped me.

As I was still a young girl, the rape was the first time that I'd had sexual intercourse with a man. It was too painful and it was very hard for me to put up with it. I shouted a lot but the rapists didn't care. Before raping me they hit me. They were offended that I had rejected their offer to sleep with them. Afterwards, I had difficulty standing up and couldn't even walk.

I didn't recognize any of the men who raped me, so I can't bring them to justice.

I fear I might have been infected through rape, but emotional, financial and practical obstacles deter me from discovering my status. I can't afford the cost of testing. I hear that you have to take a test twice to be sure. I am an orphan living with a distant relative who is also poor. If I was found HIV positive I could not afford medication, so there is no need of knowing.

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