



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

My father was killed during the genocide in 1994. My mother survived but she is handicapped. She lives with shrapnel in her body because of a hand grenade attack a few weeks prior to genocide. We were 9 childr



But things got worse. After the genocide, I realised my health was not good. I started to develop a lot of infections. I was paralysed and also suffered from tuberculosis. It was then that I was told I had contracted HIV virus. I felt that the earth was crashing in on me. I stayed in hospital from November 11th to December 4th, 2002. Though I was encouraged by the medical staff, I felt lost and completely desperate. I was advised to appeal for assistance to be able to receive antiretroviral treatment.

My aunt, a widow who is a member of a church organisation, told me that there was an organisation that helped people who have the same problems as me. So I went there. I was received warmly, and I was given an opportunity to tell things I had never dared to say. Because of this I felt somehow released. I realise that the deep sorrow that I felt in my heart began to loosen. Before, when I started to think about my situation, I looked like a mad person. But now, I feel free to talk about myself and feel very confident and I realise that the wounds are being healed. That is why I think I must start again studying.

I thank God for the people at this organisation, they have very important work to do and I ask God to enable them to do even more.

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