

This is the testimony of Marie Josee, a survivor of the Rwandan genocide

Immediately after the 6th April, there were problems in our commune. People were also very worried about their relatives in the capital.

On the 21st April, the killings began. At first they targeted the men, boys and even little boys. We took refuge at our parish, believing that no one would attack us there. There were thousands and thousands coming from all Kigali and the surrounding communes. The killers came and separated the men from the women. They ordered women to go into the church. Then they turned their guns on to the men and boys and killed them in cold blood. My brother and father were among those who were killed.

In the chaos, when they were sorting people out I sneaked away to hide in the bush. Three days later, I was found by two brothers from our commune. They handed over to the killers two boys who had managed to escape with us, and they were immediately slaughtered.

The two brothers proposed to save us by hiding us in their home. We were in all four girls. The two brothers each took two of us, and raped us anytime they wanted to. We were not allowed to live in the house. We were told that if we went out we would be raped by militia or killed. We knew they were right. We stayed with them throughout the genocide until the area was liberated in mid June. Once the genocide ended, the brothers fled to the Democratic Republic of Congo. We have not seen them since.

I found out that my mother had been killed at the parish. All of us four girls were liberated. From time to time we meet up again, but we find it difficult to discuss our circumstances. What is there to talk about? I feel sad when I see them. I think they feel the same way too.

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