



## **This is the testimony of Odette, a survivor of the Rwandan genocide**

I am a student studying human sciences in the fifth year of secondary school. I am an orphan. My entire family, except for a sister, was killed in the genocide. I live with my sister who did not have a chance to continue school.

My family fled to a church in Musambira district because we thought that there would not be killings in a house of God. Neighbors and *interahamwe* came from everywhere and threw grenades in the building. The killers holding machetes, and clubs with nails stopped those who were trying to escape. I was bleeding on my legs. Dead bodies and those who were about to die were lying all over the building. There was blood everywhere. Then the *interahamwe* came to steal money from the dead. The whole church was full of the cries of people dying or those who are being killed

As they were leaving the bodies, someone said that I was still alive. They decided not to kill me. About four other children survived. Together we made it to Kabgayi. My leg was cut by a grenade. I was sad thinking about how I would survive with one leg and without parents. I wondered who would care for me. I stayed in a hospital until it healed.

After the genocide, I found my sister. We have had a hard life. I heard about Solace and I went to ask for notebooks. They gave these to me but I also found comfort. I met others that shared my problems. They comforted me and I felt that I was not an orphan. Through Solace, God gave me new parents, a new crutch and other children. So there is no loneliness; we are a family.

I study well but I still have problems with materials and other needs that young girls have. I thank the Lord who comforts us and prevents us from worrying about tomorrow. We are taught how to live and given advice that should be given by aunts if we had them. This makes us feel that we are no longer rejected but that we are special.

**Today's Reading of the Testimonies marks the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, in support of survivors like Odette.**