

Who Will Speak?

A Liturgy of Solidarity for Rwanda

This liturgy is devised in FIVE parts or *stations*. It can be used in its entirety as a non-Eucharistic liturgy, or each station can be prayed separately – perhaps one each day during a focus week or one each week through Lent.

THE 1st STATION – Connecting with Rwanda

Leader *Today [and all through Lent] we will be remembering our brothers and sisters in Rwanda and holding them in prayer.*

Background information

Rwanda is a tiny, landlocked country in the heart of east Africa. It is about the same size as Wales, but has a population of more than eight million people.

In 1994 around 1.2 million people were killed during a 100-day rampage of violence. This genocide was fuelled by deep divisions between Rwanda's two main ethnic groups – the Hutu and the Tutsi.

1994 might seem like a lifetime ago for us, but for those who lived through those awful times, and are still dealing with the aftermath, the memories are as real and as painful as if it was yesterday. We remember them today.

Reader: We light a candle for Love

ALL: It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness

A short pause for silent prayer whilst a candle is lit

Scripture: A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans (RSV Translation)

Romans 12: 9-10, 13,15-16

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Leader: *We weren't there in 1994, some of us weren't even old enough to really know what was happening. But all the people of this world are connected, and we are called to love one another as brothers and sisters.*

So we pray for forgiveness, not just for what the people of the world did or didn't do in 1994, but for what we do or don't do to make a difference today.

Prayer: Love was silent when the innocent cried and hid in fear

Father, forgive us

Love was silent when children died in their mothers' arms for the sake of an identity card

Father, forgive us

Love was silent when the bodies were piled in unmarked graves

Father, forgive us

and give our love a voice

Amen

1 Song: Who Will Speak?

Marty Haugen © 1993 GIA Publication Inc.

Who will speak if you don't?

Who will speak if you don't?

*Who will speak so their voice will be heard?
Who will speak if you don't?*

Who will speak for the poor and the broken?
Who will speak for the peoples oppressed?
Who will speak so their voice will be heard?
Oh, who will speak if you don't?

*Who will speak if you don't?
Who will speak if you don't?
Who will speak so their voice will be heard?
Who will speak if you don't?*

Who will speak for the children of violence?
Who will speak for the women abused?
Who will speak so their voice will be heard?
Oh, who will speak if you don't?

THE 2nd STATION – Never Give Up

Leader: The people in Rwanda have experienced horrific happenings, but despite incredible challenges they are rebuilding their lives...

[Today] We pray that they will not lose hope and will know that they are supported by the prayers and action of ordinary people like us all over the world.

Reader: We light a candle for hope

ALL: It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness

A short pause for silent prayer and a candle is lit

Scripture: A reading from the book of Job (RSV translation)

Job 11:16-18

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Reflection: Signs of Hope

Narrator: There are many signs of hope in Rwanda.

Liberaté is one of the many, many women who were widowed because their husbands were killed in the genocide. During the genocide Liberaté also saw her own son clubbed to death and her brother buried alive.

Liberaté has found hope through AVEGA, an organisation which – with CAFOD's help – supports women widowed during the violence with counselling, helping them to deal with their terrible memories and fears.

Liberaté: *"I first heard about AVEGA on the radio. Before that I was never hopeful, but when I heard about AVEGA I felt something good for the first time since the war."*

 **2 Song: Bamblela (Never Give Up)**

South African

*Never give up! Never give up!
No, never give up! never give up!
Never, never, never, never, never,
No, never, never give up!*

Narrator: Liberaté has now been trained by AVEGA to counsel others in the same situation as her. Liberaté is counselling Collette, a widowed friend.

Collette: *Since 1994 I have had no-one to talk to and I had problems, but God has brought me Liberaté. I lost all my children in the war and I have no more children now. I have no-one but Liberaté who has given me the strength to continue up to now.*

Narrator: Collette is still heartbroken about the loss of her children, but Liberaté has helped her a lot, and Collette says that contact with other people has become easier since she joined the AVEGA women's group.

♪ 2 Song: Bamblela (Never Give Up)

*Bamblela, bambelela!
O bambelela, bambelela!
Bamba, bamba, bamba, bamba, bamba,
O bamba, bambelela!*

Narrator: All over Rwanda, AVEGA and other CAFOD partners are working to heal the pain and help people move on with their lives. They visit schools to make sure that children affected by the violence can talk to a trained counsellor; they support children who have been orphaned and are now responsible for looking after younger brothers and sisters; they are helping to house those who have been left homeless and they give loans to widowed women keen to set up small businesses such as selling charcoal. The people of Rwanda have not lost hope.

♪ 2 Song: Bamblela (Never Give Up)

THE 3rd STATION – A People of Faith

Leader: *In spite of all they have been through, Liberaté and her children and many people like them in Rwanda continue to demonstrate that their faith in God's goodness remains strong.*

Reader: We light a candle for Faith

ALL: **It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness**

A short pause for silent prayer and a candle is lit

♪ 3: Reflection *Play the Solo Voice Audio Track* (1 minute)

Reader: This is the translation of the song we just heard:

My heart praises the Lord.
Everything that lives in my world praises the Lord and thanks him
I thank him for every good thing he has done for me

Everything that God does is right

he even heals all the sickness that I have
he gives me his mercy to wear as a crown
and fills me with goodness, never-ending goodness

He forgives all my sins
and if someone has been wronged
he is on their side to help them get justice
He gives me everlasting goodness

Leader: *Let's join the song of praise that our sisters and brothers in Rwanda sing in spite of their troubles, as we proclaim the words of The Magnificat.*

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord
And my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour;
Because he has looked upon his lowly servant.
Yes, from this day forward
all generations will call me blessed,
for the Almighty has done great things for me
Holy his name, and his mercy reaches from age to age
for those who fear him
He has shown the power of his arm,
He has scattered the proud of heart
He has pulled down princes from their thrones
and lifted up the lowly.
The hungry he has filled with Good things,
The rich sent empty away.

Scripture: A reading from the Gospel of Luke
(RSV Translation) Luke 1:46-51

This is the Word of the Lord

♪ Song: The Milk of Human Kindness

Reader In Rwanda, milk is a symbol of luck and happiness. It will always be offered to guests on its own or in coffee or tea, and to refuse milk is like refusing happiness. It is kept in wooden milk bottles, which are often given as traditional wedding presents to bring luck and blessing to the newlyweds.

ALL: Today, as we pray that God will pour many blessings upon the faithful people of Rwanda, we offer them a gift of milk ... Not the sort of milk you can drink, but the milk of human kindness in the funds that we can raise in these milk bottles!

♪ 4 Song: The Lord Will Bless Someone Today

Transcribed from the singing of Fatmata Jah & Olivia Kamasah
(Origin unknown)

The Lord will bless someone today

*It may be you, it may be me,
it may be someone by your side.
It may be you, it may be me,
it may be someone by your side.*

Prayer: God, our Saviour

who lifts up the lowly and feeds the hungry,
we trust in your everlasting goodness.
Pour your mercy and blessing upon
the people of Rwanda,
today and always.
Amen

THE 4th STATION – Instruments of Peace

Leader: *The future of Rwanda depends on the people being able to build a lasting peace. The history of Rwanda shows how Tutsis and Hutus had lived peacefully together for centuries, sharing the same language and customs.*

In 1899 Rwanda was colonized by Germany and after the First World War the country came under Belgian control. The Belgians introduced identity cards, which identified people by their ethnic groups. And so the tensions and divisions began...

Reader: We light a Candle for Peace

ALL: **It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness**

A short pause for silent prayer and a candle is lit

Reflection “100 days of fighting”

100 days of fighting to get the upper hand;
more money or more power, more property, more land

100 days of fighting, ‘cause I don’t like your face;
or your skin or your language, your religion or your race

100 days of fighting, to set the record straight;
a century of tension, boiled over into hate

Now a wife has lost her husband
And a mother’s lost her son
And a 13-year-old girl remembers being on the run

And children have no parents
And women hide their shame
And no one really knows where they ought to lay the blame

And one hundred thousand prisoners
are waiting for release
And a broken-hearted nation still dreams of finding peace.

Scripture: A reading from the letter of St James

(3: 16-18)

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Litany

We pray for peace in the many parts of our world broken by violence and conflict:

In Afghanistan

Response: Lord, let your peace come

In the Middle East **(Response)**

In the North of Ireland **(Response)**

In Liberia **(Response)**

In the towns and cities of our own country **(Response)**

In our own homes **(Response)**

In Rwanda, where the pain of injustice is not yet forgotten **(Response)**

Sign of Peace

Leader: As a sign of our commitment to not just pray for peace, but to work for peace, let us offer each other a sign of peace.

5 Song: Lord, Let Your Peace Come

Words & Music by Mike Stanley & Joanne Boyce © CJM Music Ltd

Lord, let your peace come

Lord let your will be done

Voices, hands and hearts united

by your grace, no more divided

Abba, Father

Lord, let your peace come

THE 5th STATION – Let Justice Flow

Leader: For a moment, let us remember not just the victims of the terrible violence that took place in Rwanda, let's also remember those who are believed to be responsible for committing the crimes.

We remember all those who are waiting for justice.

Reader: We light a candle for Justice

ALL: It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness

A short pause for silent prayer and a candle is lit

Reader 1: There are still about 120,000 prisoners resulting from the genocide. While thousands have already faced trial, the majority have been awaiting trial for nine years. Many were just children when they were arrested and have grown up in prison.

Reader 2: Recently an estimated 50,000 prisoners have been released to return to their communities, because many of them have been awaiting trial longer than they would have served as a sentence.

Reader 3: Victims and prisoners alike are waiting for justice. But the voice of justice is so often drowned out by the loud, insistent voices of those who prefer to choose another way.
(interrupted by first voice of following dialogue)

Dialogue: The Voice of Justice:

(read in a dramatic style)

Voice 1: I am the voice of hatred!

I speak the language of jealousy and envy.

I have seduced people into unspeakable acts of violence and murder. I have been ruthless in my quest to be heard.

And I *will* be heard!

ALL: Be silent! For our hearts will no longer listen to the voice of hatred!

Voice 2: I am the voice of vengeance!

I speak the language of spitefulness and revenge.

I have deceived people with my clever arguments and impressive words. I have been ruthless in my quest to be heard. And I *will* be heard!

ALL: Be silent! For our hearts will no longer listen to the voice of vengeance!

Voice 3: I am the voice of anger!

I speak the language of bitterness and resentment.

I have made people cold and unforgiving. I have been ruthless in my quest to be heard. And I *will* be heard!

**ALL: Be silent! For our hearts will no longer listen to the voice of anger!
We long to hear the voice of justice.**

Scripture: Hear the words of the prophet Isaiah

(32:15-18)

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Prayer: God of Justice,

Transforming hatred into love,

vengeance into forgiveness,

and anger into compassion:

Help us to speak your language of justice

and to speak the truth of your love for all people.


Who will speak if we don't

Give us courage to work together for peace

Who will work if we don't

Give us hearts of compassion, to care for those oppressed
and in need

Who will care if we don't

 **1 Song: Who Will Speak?**

Marty Haugen © 1993 GIA Publication Inc.

Who will speak if you don't?

Who will speak if you don't?

Who will speak so their voice will be heard?

Who will speak if you don't?

Who will speak for the poor and the broken?

Who will speak for the peoples oppressed?

Who will speak so their voice will be heard?

Oh, who will speak if you don't?

*Who will speak if you don't?
Who will speak if you don't?
Who will speak so their voice will be heard?
Who will speak if you don't?*

Who will speak for the children of violence?
Who will speak for the women abused?
Who will speak so their voice will be heard?
Oh, who will speak if you don't?

Who will speak? Leader's notes

The leader's script is intended to "animate" the liturgy and help it to flow. Ideally, these comments are given *ad lib* rather than read from the script.

The amount of background information needed to set the scene will depend on discussion and other activities on the topic before the liturgy takes place.

 indicates where music or audio material has been provided on CD for your use, available from CAFOD Resources office - contact resources@cafod.org.uk or phone 0207 326 5572 or 0207 326 5571.

3rd Station – A people of faith

Scripture – Idea: You might consider using a sung setting of the *Magnificat* here. Or a recorded version to which a dance or mime could be set.

Milk of human kindness – Idea: If the "milk bottle" collection could be done in advance, filled milk bottles could be brought forward in procession and placed in central focus

OR

Empty milk bottles could be given out and groups encouraged to fill them through the course of Lent (perhaps one for each small group or form group)

OR

Empty milk bottles could be passed among the assembly and a collection taken up as part of the liturgy
While "The Lord will Bless someone today" is sung, the milk bottle collection takes place.