



EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY  
For International Justice  
and Human Rights  
**CHURCH WORLD SERVICE**

# Offering of Prayers

Prayers for women living with and vulnerable to HIV/AIDS

*Lead me out of my prison that I may give thanks to your name.  
Then the just shall gather around me because you have been good to me.  
Psalm 142:8*



**W**orldwide, women comprise almost 50 percent of all adult cases, and in high HIV/AIDS prevalence regions like Sub-Saharan Africa, women represent close to 60 percent of adult cases. Gender inequities contribute greatly to the feminization of the global HIV/AIDS epidemic, particularly in the developing world<sup>1</sup>. Women in the developing world are more likely than men to be poor, malnourished, and illiterate. These women are also excluded from political and economic decision-making mechanisms, and their rights to property and employment are regularly violated<sup>2</sup>. Consequently, poverty among women breeds powerlessness in all aspects of daily life.

Limited access to education as well as information about modes of HIV/AIDS transmission, sexual exploitation and violence against girls, domestic violence against women, including rape, and the use of rape as a weapon of war increases the vulnerability of women and girls to HIV/AIDS<sup>3</sup>.

As people of faith we must lead the way in creating an environment of care, compassion and support for women and girls living with HIV/AIDS. On this global day of prayer and reflection for people with HIV/AIDS, please join Church World Service and pray for additional support and resources to empower and protect women and girls against this deadly disease.

<sup>1</sup>Kates, J., Summers, T. *The Global HIV/AIDS Epidemic*, Kaiser Family Foundation, July 2004

<sup>2</sup>Getui, M., Wamue, G. *Violence Against Women*. Acton Publishers, Nairobi: 1996.

<sup>3</sup>Correa, M. *Understanding and Addressing the Gender Dimension of HIV and AIDS, for the Study of the Bible*. Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance Preconference, Bangkok : 2004.

Photo by T. Mott, March 2004: Odette Mukeshimana, 20 years old. She lives in Rukaza Sector, Gitarama Province, Rwanda. She is the recipient of vocational training from YWCA through a CWS-supported child-headed household program in 2003.

# Prayers and reflection for women living with and vulnerable to HIV/AIDS<sup>4</sup>

## Prayers in Support of Women Living with HIV/AIDS

Almighty God, Healer of Healers, we come before Your throne of mercy. You sent Your Son and He bore our iniquities. We pray that Your Spirit lighten our hearts. Touch us in Your special way. Unto us whisper words of healing and comfort, into our hearts pour the spirit of trust. Transform us to become like the tree planted by water. Lord, we know You have plans for us, plans for good not evil.

When our bodies hurt. When our spirits are low. When our anxieties wear us down. We pray for endurance and hope. Dear God, we know You listen to our prayers. Your Spirit intercedes on our behalf. We pray. Amen

### Prayer and Reflection on gender injustice

God our Creator, Your image is so beautiful. It may vary from child, to mother, from grandfather to lover, but it is Your image. We pray that we might see the same beautiful images in each other.

Help us to grow beyond our own prejudices of gender injustice, hatred and abuse. Help us to appreciate our differences, so that we might affirm each other. Mold us into Your image. We pray. Amen

#### *Reflection*

John 20:11-18

### Trust In The Lord

Aches, aches, aches,  
Searing pain,  
Soaring doubt,  
Deepening despair,

My children!  
These little ones, the ones You so love?  
Should I leave them now, tender as they are?  
Why do You hide Your face, God of love?

As I sit alone in silence,  
A small voice reassures me,  
In the Lord I take refuge,  
For thou art with me,  
Thy rod and thy staff,  
They comfort me,

More than a conqueror,  
Heir of the kingdom,  
Bearer of the promise,  
I shall trust in You forever. Amen

<sup>4</sup>All prayers adapted from Dube, M. *AfricaPraying: A Handbook on HIV/AIDS Sensitive Sermon Guidelines and Liturgy*, World Council of Churches, Geneva, 2004.

## Prayer and Reflection on Gender Violence

Creator God, You created the earth and everything in it. You created everything interdependent and You created everything good. You created men and women in Your image, You blessed them both. Help us to see Your image on the faces of the victims of our violence. Help us to remember we have no right to subject anyone to violence. Help all of us who live in violence to realize and affirm our own dignity. Help us to realize we are made in Your image.

Help us to remember that we should never tolerate violence. Help Your church to realize that Jesus did not tolerate violence against women. Help us to fight violence in the HIV/AIDS era, for it hampers both prevention and the provision of quality care. We pray. Amen

### *Reflection*

John 8:1-12

#### **Advocacy matters. Speak Out to build a better world!**

Go to [www.churchworldservice.org](http://www.churchworldservice.org) and click on "Global Issues."

Join us in calling on the U.S. government and key international institutions to formulate policies responsive to the needs of people around the world living with HIV/AIDS.

The education and advocacy activities of Church World Service are made possible through the generous support of individuals and churches around the country. Please join us in building a better world for people with HIV/AIDS by sending your contributions to Church World Service, P.O. Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46515.



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