

# STORY OF HEROISM FUELS AUTHOR'S MISSION



Fr. Jean d'Amour  
Dusengumuremyi

The inspiring true story of a woman named Félicité Niyitegeka made such an impact on Fr. Jean d'Amour Dusengumuremyi that he's dedicated himself to ensuring the world never forgets this selfless martyr from his home country of Rwanda. During the tragic genocide perpetrated against the Tutsis by Hutu extremists in 1994 in Rwanda, Félicité worked to save as many

Tutsis as possible. She was an Auxiliary of the Apostolate, which is a consecrated laywoman of the Catholic Church, and worked at Centre Saint-Pierre, a center for spiritual retreats, meetings and formation. Félicité provided shelter and helped the Tutsis escape across the border to the Democratic Republic of Congo for safety.

As a Hutu herself and the sister of an army colonel, Félicité was warned when the militia found out what she was doing. She had enough notice to leave and save herself before the soldiers would arrive, but wrote a letter to her brother saying that she would not abandon the people she was protecting. The letter, which was written in Kinyarwanda, is translated below. Félicité and the refugees were transported to a mass grave where the soldiers made her watch as they shot and killed the others before turning the gun on her.

"She tried to save all who came to her for help, and when the Hutu extremists attacked her residence, she accompanied those who were seized simply for being Tutsi to their deaths, and so was put to death, too," Fr. Jean said. In 2001, Félicité was proclaimed a national heroine in Rwanda. That's when Fr. Jean first learned of her martyrdom and felt compelled to

share her story with a wider audience. Félicité became a role model for Rwandans and an example of overcoming hatred. Fr. Jean carefully gathered testimonials from Félicité's family, people who knew her, and even some of the people who she bravely protected. In 2015, he published a book about her life titled, "No Greater Love." It has been translated to English and is widely available where books are sold.

"She demonstrated her love, modeled after Jesus' love, even at the price of her life," Fr. Jean said. "Her life demonstrates her belief that all people have value and dignity." Students come to Divine Word College in hopes of achieving a variety of goals. Fr. Jean, who is a diocesan priest, wanted to improve his command of the English language and expand his book about Félicité. Having recently completed his ESL courses, he's now working toward an associate degree in Intercultural Studies. He's been thoughtfully adding to the publication during his downtime at the college. Fr. Jean said he hopes her story will encourage readers to stand up for what is right and advocate on behalf of people who are unjustly persecuted.

*"Love is stronger than death and perfect love casts out fear," he said. "Our life is not measured by days but love."*

**Felisita  
Niyitegeka**  
Abamuzi baramuvuga  
koko ni intwari



Jean d'Amour Dusengumuremyi

Dear brother,

*Thank you for your desire to save me. But instead of saving my life by abandoning the 43 people dying, I prefer to die with them. Pray for us that we may arrive in heaven and say goodbye for me to our mother, brothers and sisters. Once arrived in heaven I will pray for you to God. Thank you very much for thinking about me. And if God saves us as we hope, we'll see one another tomorrow.*

Your sister, Félicité