News 20 November 2026 | English article

Trafficked as a Boy, Now a Priest: Father Jean de Dieu Bukuru's Fight Against Modern Slavery

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"I had lost confidence in myself and in other human beings, but I had not lost hope in God,"

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

A Burundian priest who was beaten every day as a child slave has told the world he never lost hope in God. Father Jean de Dieu Bukuru, now one of the Catholic Church's leading anti-trafficking advocates, was still a minor seminarian when armed men stormed his dormitory, dragged the boys into the forest at gunpoint, and held them in slavery. His testimony, published by the Vatican's Fides news agency on 19 November, tells of beatings that began at two in the morning, a five-day escape through hostile bush, and a life rebuilt around a single vow: that no other child should suffer what he suffered.

"I had lost confidence in myself and in other human beings, but I had not lost hope in God," Father Jean de Dieu said. It is a sentence that carries the whole of his story - the loss, the survival, and the faith that outlasted both.

He was a boy when it happened, during Burundi's civil war in the 1990s. One night, armed men burst into the seminary dormitory. "They terrorised us by pointing guns, knives and clubs at us," he recalled. The attackers beat the boys with cords, gun butts and their bare hands, then forced them into the forest under threat of death. "They warned us sternly that whoever tried to escape would be slaughtered on the spot." After an overnight march, the seminarians were handed to another armed group deeper in the forest, stripped of their belongings and left almost naked.

Beaten At 2 A.m.: A Seminarian Dragged Into Slavery

At the rebel base, the boys were put to work as slaves. They cooked, fetched water, gathered firewood, dug and carried heavy loads. Each day began at around 2 a.M., When beatings accompanied the assignment of labour. "Every day we were beaten," Father Jean de Dieu said of that period. "They did not give us anything to eat and at night we had no place to sleep."

The violence was deliberate and public. When some of the boys tried to escape, they were caught and brought back. They were beaten to death in front of all the others - a warning designed to crush whatever hope remained. It is the detail that stops you cold: children made to watch other children die, so that they would stop dreaming of freedom.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

READ THE FULL STORY

Continue on FaithStories -- the complete article, with sources and related stories:
https://faithstories.onrender.com/articles/news-1010.html?utm_source=pdf_guide&utm_medium=organic_pdf

More from FaithStories

FaithStories - Home
https://faithstories.onrender.com/

(Hindi) Aaja: FCRA Vidheyaka 2026 Para Puurvottara Ke Iisaaii Sangathanon Ne JPC Se Vaapasii Kii Maanga Kii
https://faithstories.onrender.com/articles/hi/news-1017.html

(Portuguese) Hoje: Padre Júlio Lancellotti volta às redes sociais após quase um ano
https://faithstories.onrender.com/articles/pt/news-1016.html

(Spanish) Hoy: Cardenal de Asunción exige investigar la megaestafa de Ueno Bank
https://faithstories.onrender.com/articles/es/news-1015.html