

# The GATHERING

*"Do not be afraid, for I am with you, I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west"*

—Isaiah 43:5-7

## Connecting Our Challenges and Suffering

As I look back, 2025 has become a year of reflection. On June 07, 2025, my beloved mother, Katsi Ndandu, was rushed to the Emergency Room. I never thought that she would not return home again. This was followed by days and weeks of heartache, pain, and uncertainty. Then I realized: it was not only my family that was facing challenges, but thousands of other families felt my same pain and uncertainty.



Mother's home village of Balu, DRC taken by Helen Mfwilwakanda

Immigration issues dominated the news this year. ICE raids were taking place in several cities. Families were being separated, loved ones taken away. ICE agents didn't care if it was a parent, young, or elderly person. The brutality of the raids was senseless. What happened to democracy and the American dream? Why so much pain, heartache, and desolation around?

On Tuesday, September 09, 2025, my beloved mother, Katsi Ndandu passed away. As we went to say goodbye, she looked calm, peaceful, just as if she was fast asleep. Then, I remembered the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to wake him up" (John 11:11, ESV). Yes,

indeed, Jesus is the Life and the Resurrection. He is our hope, the only hope. He is the one who will gather us all home. He is the only One who can heal the brokenhearted. Who else can change the hearts of those who are in authority? Who else can fill their hearts with love, mercy, and compassion?

My brother, my sister, and I took my mother back to the Democratic Republic of Congo to be buried in her village, Balu. After the burial, we went back to Kinshasa, the capital city. From the window of a high-rise restaurant, I looked down at the city and saw so much misery. If the leaders of nations were God-fearing, their people would happily live in their countries and not go to other countries in search of a better life and become targets of discrimination.

Let us continue to pray for justice and become a voice for the voiceless.

## Questions:

How can your present sufferings connect you with the sufferings of those impacted by ICE? How does Jesus bring you hope in the midst of these sufferings?

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