

SHORT HISTORY ABOUT THE APPARITION IN KIBEHO

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Always our Lady, the Virgin Mary, our Mother and Mother of our Saviour has appeared as apparitions under many titles to many diverse peoples in different periods of history. She suffered a sword piercing her heart as she watched her son's Passion and Death, and she is constantly alert to even our smallest sufferings. Our Blessed Mother comes to us when we need her most, with a message and guidance specific to the problems and suffering at hand. In all her apparitions, Our Lady inspires us and remind us of the eternal compassion and counsel which she unceasingly offers to her children.

The Virgin Mary appeared to the group with the name "Nyina wa Jambo" ("Mother of the Word") synonymous with "Umubyeyi W'Imana" ("Mother of God"). The teenage visionaries reported that the Virgin Mary asked everyone to pray to prevent a terrible war. In the vision of Aug. 19, 1982, they all reported seeing violence, dismembered corpses and destruction.

The longest series of visions were attributed to Alphonsine Mumureke who received the first vision on November 28, 1981 and the last on November 28, 1989. Anathalie Mukamazimpaka's visions began in January 1982 and ended on 3 December 1983. Marie Claire Mukangango had visions for six months, lasting from 2 March 1982 until 15 September 1982. She was later killed in the massacre of 1995 at the same location. One of the visionaries, Nathalie Mukamazimpaka reported her time when she met the Virgin Mary: "It was about 4:30pm when I was in the dormitory. I was on my bed praying and I saw the image of a beautiful lady from the sunset, she came and when she was about four meters above, she stopped and called my name: "Nathalie my daughter, pray hard, pray hard, pray hard for the world is in danger." During his visit to Rwanda in 1990, Pope St. John Paul II begged his listeners to heed the Virgin's pleas and pray fervently for peace among political and ethnic factions: "On this feast of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, which marks the dawn of salvation to the world, I ask the Mother of all of us to watch over her children in Rwanda and particularly you, the leaders of the country, to place your talents at the service of all your compatriots."

Our attention here is drawn to the His Lordship, Augustin Misago, the Bishop of Gikongoro, who approved public devotion linked to the apparitions on 15 August 1988 (the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary) and declared their authenticity on 29 June 2001.

"It is true that the Mother of God appeared in Kibeho on the day of November 28, 1981 and during the following months. There are more well-founded reasons to believe in this than to deny it. For this reason, only three visionaries from the beginning of the revelations deserve to be recognized as authentic, namely Alphonsine Mumureke, Nathalie Mukamazimpaka, and Marie Claire Mukangano. The Virgin Mary appeared to them dedicated as "Nyina wa Jambo," meaning "Mother of the Word," which is a synonym for "Umubyeyi w'Imana," which means "Mother of God," as she explained it. The visionaries maintain that they saw her sometimes with hands folded, then other times unfolded."

Here is a summary of the main points of Our Lady's message to the visionaries:

- An urgent appeal to the repentance and conversion of hearts: "Repent, repent, repent!", "Convert while there is still time."
- A assessment of the moral state of the world: "The world conducts itself very badly," "The world hastens to its ruin, it will fall into the abyss," in other words, it is plunged into innumerable and unrelenting disasters. "The world is rebellious against God, it commits too many sins, it has neither love nor peace." "If you do not repent and do not convert your hearts, you will fall into the abyss."
- The deep sorrow of the Mother of God: The Mother of God was very saddened because of people's unbelief and lack of repentance.

- “Faith and unbelief will come unseen”
- The suffering that saves: Suffering, which is unavoidable in this life, is necessary for Christians to attain eternal glory. Kibeho is a reminder of the role of the cross in the life of a Christian and the Church.
- Pray always, with Zeal and single-heartedly
- Marian devotion – expressed through sincere and regular praying of the rosary.
- The Rosary to the Seven Sorrows of the Mother of God:
- Mary desires that a chapel be built for her – as a sign of the remembrance of her revelations in Kibeho.
- Pray always for the Church, when many troubles are upon it in the times to come.

Bishop Misago affirmed that the message of Kibeho had produced flourishing prayer groups, where the Rosary and the Seven Sorrows were being prayed. Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament was established after the genocide; and thousands of pilgrims, increasing in numbers year by year, were visiting the Shrine.

On April 3, 2014, Pope Francis referred to Our Lady of Kibeho when addressing the Bishops of Rwanda:

Dear brothers, I want to assure you again of my closeness to you, and to your Diocesan communities, to the entire nation of Rwanda, and I entrust you all to the maternal protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Mother of Jesus wished to manifest herself in your country to some children, reminding them of the effectiveness of fasting and prayer, especially the prayer of the Rosary. I do wish that you may make the Sanctuary of Kibeho radiate even more of that love of Mary for all her children, especially for the poorest and the most vulnerable. May it be a call for the Church of Rwanda, and beyond, to turn with confidence to Our Lady of Sorrows. May she accompany each one in his journey and obtain for him the gift of reconciliation and peace.

The Rosary of the Seven Sorrows

The Rosary of the Seven Sorrows dates back to the Middle Ages, but it has gained new popularity following the Marian apparitions in Kibeho, which have been approved by the Catholic Church. During Mary's apparitions to Marie-Claire Mukangango, she assigned the young visionary a mission to reintroduce this special rosary to the world. Before her untimely death, Marie Claire did just that, traveling widely to teach it to thousands of people, who then taught it to thousands of others. The Holy Virgin promised that when prayed with an open and repentant heart, the rosary would win us the Lord's forgiveness for our sins and free our souls from guilt and remorse. She also promised that over time, the rosary would develop within us a deep understanding of why we sin, and that knowledge would give us the wisdom and strength to change or remove any internal faults, weaknesses of character, or personality faults causing unhappiness and keeping us from enjoying the joyous life God intended for us. As the community of St. Mbaaga welcomes Our Lady, I invite you to open your hearts to her maternal solace as we recite the rosary in procession around the seminary. Amen.