

His Excellency, Bishop Augustin Misago, Bishop of Gikongoro, Rwanda, wrote a declaration on June 29, 2001, regarding the Revelations in Kibeho. In it, he declared:

As Ordinary of the place of the revelations, I announce the following:

1. 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 “Nynia 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.

Summarizing the main points of the message, he wrote:

In short, this address can be brought to the following points:

1. An urgent appeal to the repentance and conversion of hearts:

“Repent, repent, repent!”, “Convert while there is still time.”

2. An 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.”

3. The deep sorrow of the Mother of God:

The visionaries claim to have seen Mary crying on August 15, 1982. The Mother of God was very saddened because of people’s unbelief and lack of repentance. She complained of our bad way of life, which is characterized by the slackness of customs, the likeness of evil, and continuous disobedience to God’s Commandments.

4. “Faith and unbelief will come unseen”

These mysterious words were repeatedly spoken by Mary to Alfonsine at the beginning of the revelations. She was asked to repeat them to the other people.

5. The suffering that saves:

This subject is among the most important among the revelations in Kibeho, particularly for Natalie Mukamazimpaka. Suffering, which is unavoidable in this life, is necessary for Christians to attain eternal glory. On May 15, 1982, Mary said to her visionaries, especially to Natalie, “No one will reach heaven without suffering,” or, “A child of Mary does not reject suffering.” Suffering is both a means of compensating for the sins of the world and participating in Jesus’ and Mary’s sufferings for the salvation of the world. The visionaries were invited through this address to live very specifically, accepting suffering through faith in love, mortifying themselves and denying themselves pleasures for the conversion of the world. Thus, Kibeho is a reminder of the role of the cross in the life of a Christian and the Church.

6. “Pray always and single-heartedly”

People are not praying, and those who do pray, do not pray as they should. Mary begs the visionaries to pray in abundance for the whole world, to teach others to pray, and to pray for those who do not pray themselves. Mary begs us to pray with greater zeal and purity of heart.

7. **Marian devotion** – expressed through sincere and regular praying of the rosary.

8. The Rosary to the Seven Sorrows of the Mother of God:

The visionary Marie Claire Mukangano claims to have received revelations regarding this rosary. This rosary pleases the Mother of God. It was once well known, but now it has now been forgotten. The Mother of God of Kibeho desires for it to be renewed and spread in the Church. However, this prayer does not replace the Holy Rosary.

9. **Mary desires that a chapel be built for her** – as a sign of the remembrance of her revelations in Kibeho. This subject appears in the revelations of January 16, 1982 and recurs many times in the course of the year with new supplements.

10. **Pray always for the Church**, when many troubles are upon it in the times to come. Thus Mary said to Alfonsine on August 15, 1983 and November 28, 1983.

According to the alleged visionaries, Mary’s address in Kibeho *“is not directed to only one person nor does it concern only the current time; it is directed to everyone in the entire world.”*

The analysis of the conversions with the visionaries makes it clear that in their view, the Mother of God did not come to Kibeho with new teaching, but to remind us with full clarity of that which we had forgotten. She came to awaken us, to shake our consciences, to warn us, to remind us of our responsibilities as children of God, to lead us onto the right path, and to motivate us to correct their lives. In short, she came for the sake of our spiritual renewal and salvation. Mary, who is our mother, cannot abandon her children to their destruction. Even more saddening is the blindness and the hardening of our hearts."

Lastly, he wrote:

I could not finish this declaration without giving a few practical tips regarding your behavior in relation to the revelations in Kibeho. These recommendations do not differ from those already formulated by Bishop J. B. Gahamanyi in his pastoral letters. However, it is not superfluous to take up a few of them here, supplementing them with others that I consider necessary.

1. First I will recall that in the Church of God and in the life of every Christian, the Bible – the Word of God – is and should remain the highest standard of our faith and our human action. I warmly recommend to each person to love the Word of God contained in the Holy Scriptures and to ceaselessly ponder it in order to better live according to it in faithfulness to the teaching of the Church. There we have everything necessary to know and practice to be a good Christian, and in this way merit entry into the heavenly kingdom. Consequently, it is not a good thing for the words of those who consider themselves visionaries, even if they are officially recognized, to be treated equally with the words of the Holy Scriptures.

2. In Christian faith and prayer, one should be watchful in order to ensure priority to Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and men (1 Tim 2:5-6). It is about him that the Holy Scriptures speak: “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). No creation can be placed above Jesus Christ – the only Savior of the world.
3. In this context, I find it suitable to strongly emphasize the meaning of the bond that should exist between Marian devotion and an ever greater attachment to Jesus. Mary leads us to Him, for He is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life,” and “No one comes to the Father except through Him” (John 14:6).
4. I encourage pastors and their coworkers in missionary activity to teach the faithful with doubled zeal and proper religious instruction about what constitutes healthy devotion to the Mother of God. May they do this in the light of the teaching of the Holy Scriptures and in the living Tradition of the Church. It is a normal thing to also be inspired by the address from Kibeho conveyed by the officially recognized visionaries.
5. Our Christian life cannot be limited by such practices. It must also manifest itself in deeds expressing our love to our neighbors and in building around ourselves the kingdom of God, “the kingdom of truth and life, the kingdom of light and grace, the kingdom of love, justice, and peace” (preface from the celebration of Christ the King). The one who prays should commit without reluctance in serving his brothers. The life of a Christian should be in accordance with his faith. Nothing would be more in opposition to true Marian devotion than a Christian life that neglects the demands of truth, justice, peace, and love. This is true also for married and family life in accordance with the Gospel.
6. We should be careful not to liken religious practices to rites that border on magic, as though by our words or actions we could force God to fulfill our desires. It is certain that we must pray, ask, and seek, just as our Lord himself directs us (Mt 7:7), but we can never forget that God is completely free in giving his gifts and we cannot impose on Him our desires or, more specifically, our wills. He gives as he pleases and at the moment he considers appropriate. Through this systematization of these notions I want to warn those making pilgrimage to Kibeho against the danger of a certain magical mentality that can get mixed up with good intentions when they come into contact with visionaries or ask for the blessing of water or devotional items.
7. The public cult in the place of the revelations in Kibeho will be approved to uphold Marian devotion, and should carry on with respect for the freedom of the children of God. Yet, in order for it to be useful for everyone and to bear good fruit, it must abide by the norms determined by the Church. It is important to avoid eccentricities so as not to make the impression that our faith lacks stability or seriousness, especially before those trying to discover Mary’s place in the church
8. In the framework of the permitted public cult in the place of the revelations it is allowable to celebrate the Most Holy Eucharist and other sacraments of the Church: votive masses or prayer vigils in adoration of the Mother of God, praying the rosary, adoration of the figure of the Mother of God in place or in a procession, both group

and individual pilgrimages to Kibeho with the aim of deepening our faith and moving forward in our orders to seek strive for holiness. The point of all these practices is to stand before Mary like children, who expect much from her in order to fulfill the will of God.

9. I ask that the Rosary to the Seven Sorrows of the Mother of God become a part of the practices promoted in the sanctuary in Kibeho and elsewhere. Wherever this rosary is not yet well known, may Christians be taught it in the same way as the Holy Rosary. I ask my friends and benefactors the favor of helping us in seeking ways and means that allow for the acquisition and spread of this rosary at affordable prices to the faithful. It is forbidden to spread and pray other kinds of rosaries without written permission from the bishop of the place.
10. The Stations of the Cross, the adoration of the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, the blessing of water by a priest and the subsequent blessing of the gathered faithful with that water are Christian practices that also deserve a place in the prayer programs proposed to the pilgrims in Kibeho.
11. The Feast of the Mother of God of Kibeho is celebrated annually on November 28, the anniversary of the revelations in Kibeho. The separate form of the holy mass, which contains its own prayers and readings, will be prepared and announced at the appropriate time. For the time being, common texts about the Virgin Mary given by the Roman missal can be used. I also ask that the liturgical tribute to Our Lady of Sorrows, which falls on September 15, be enhanced in the dioceses. This process should start with Kibeho since it reminds us of many things in the address from Kibeho. In this way, “Mary, the Mother of Jesus . . . shines like a sign of a certain hope and comfort before the people of God on pilgrimage” (Vaticanum II, L. G. n. 68).
12. The building of the chapel in Kibeho in the place of the revelations in adoration of Mary should be a devotional work of the faithful. The plans for construction and development of the terrain should be approved by me or by my delegate. In the meantime, let us begin to make use of the already existing equipment. Essentially nothing prevents humble beginnings. The material difficulties of receiving pilgrims will be resolved step by step. The spiritual reception of the pilgrims is already ensured by the chaplain’s ministry, which has functioned since 1988.
13. As I have already said in my Address on September 15, 1996 regard the revelations in Kibeho, we must learn to be attached to what is most important in our Christian life. What the Mother of God of Kibeho expects from us first is not to build her a lavish sanctuary of brick or beautifully hewn stone. Rather, she expects spiritual temples to be created in our hearts by cleansing them of all filth and banishing all lust and dishonesty, hate and violence, pride and deceit in its many forms, vengeance, and all murderous ideas. What the Mother of God expects from us immediately is that we zealously accept the address directed to us by the intercession of her visionaries. This address is an urgent call to repentance and conversion, to a changed way of thinking, to a denial of everything that distances us from Christ. The address obligates us to a rediscovery of the Gospel of brotherly love and to giving proof of greater zeal in prayer and obedience to God’s commandments.

14. I find it fitting to recall yet another recommendation that matters to me. It is one that has already been given by my predecessor in his first pastoral letter dated July 30, 1983 regarding the revelations in Kibeho. This recommendation is significant in the present situation. A person who has visions, even if recognized as authentic by the Church authority, still remains a human being like everyone else, along with his or her own temperament, virtues, and flaws. As long as the person remains on this earth, he or she also remains a sinner called to do penance and to realize ever more their own need for sanctification. Thus, it would be reckless to in some way “canonize” the visionaries from Kibeho for their lives. Even more harmful would be to treat them as “chosen ones” or “guarantors of good fortune.” I ask the living parents or guardians and the friends of the visionaries from Kibeho to behave with proper discretion in relation to them, not showing exaggerated meaning or excessive regard simply based on their being privileged with authentic revelations. They must be allowed to develop normally in their environment and occupy themselves with their normal activities. The precautionary measures I propose here are primarily aimed at guaranteeing the visionaries peace and encouraging them to lead as disciplined lives as possible.

In consequence, may no one be counted among those of whom St. Paul the Apostle says: “For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths” (2 Tim 4:3-4).

I give these recommendations to promote authentic Marian devotion in relation to the revelations in Kibeho and to preserve them from obscurity and distortion. I ask you to faithfully abide by them in the spirit of faith, trust, humility, and obedience, following the Virgin Mary as our example.

In this spirit, I beg the Lord to grant all of you His blessings in abundance.

Gikongoro, June 29, 2001

On the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul the Apostles
On the ninth anniversary of my pastoral work,

Augustin Misago, Bishop of Gikongoro, Rwanda