

R006 -Appendix C – Approved Marian Apparition – Our Lady of Kibeho, Rwanda-ab

Introduction

“Mary’s role in the Church is inseparable from her union with Christ and flows directly from it.” 964-Catechism of the Catholic Church. The rosary is linked with Mary and her Son thru contemplating the mysteries of her Son in the rosary. The tradition of Mary is that she understands our needs like our mother before we do. Any person who prays the rosary long enough experiences the grace of discernment. Discernment is enlightenment from God. You do not have to be Catholic to pray the rosary. Many pray the rosary... because it works!

P018: seminars: retreat: Appendix C

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Our Lady of Kibeho: Is Anyone Still Listening?

Diane McKelva • October 5, 2013

The attack on the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya, is a stark reminder of man’s inhumanity towards his fellow man; senseless retribution against the innocents for perceived injustices, political gain or religious domination. Somalia’s al-Qaeda-linked rebel group, al-Shabab, targeted and killed non-Muslims in a popular shopping mall as retribution for the Kenyan military presence in Somalia, where Kenyan troops have driven Shabab fighters out of much of the territory they once controlled.

To encapsulate the historical dynamics of African cultural and politics, in order to fully appreciate her impact on the rest of the world, would take far more time and space than this column allows. However, it is essential to acknowledge that when people hear the word “Africa,” it is not always good images that come to mind. Certainly reinforced by the international media, people more often associate Africa as a place of famine, disease, tribal wars, genocide, AIDS and ruthless dictators. When in fact, Africa is a microcosm of the human condition throughout the world.

To reinforce this assessment, one of the most compelling Marian apparitions in history occurred in Kibeho, Rwanda, with little fanfare or media coverage beyond the country’s borders. The Virgin Mary’s message is not just a message for Rwandans,

and Africans, but for the entire world. It is as relevant today as it was in 1981.

The Condition of Kibeho

To appreciate the magnitude of the events that occurred in Kibeho, you need a little perspective. The small mountain village of Kibeho is located in the southern province of Rwanda, a country on the eastern side of the continent bordering Somalia. Considered one of the poorest countries in Africa, Rwanda has an estimated 65% of people living in poverty. Between 1980 and 1981, Catholics in villages throughout Rwanda were humiliated. Almost all the statues of the Virgin Mary on display were dismembered, destroyed or stolen. People stopped praying the Rosary, believing propaganda that “the devotion was outdated.” Clergy became so frustrated until they basically gave up trying to shepherd their parishes. They no longer encouraged praying the Rosary, and thus, the Blessed Mother was almost forgotten.

Between 1981 and 1989, numerous visionaries had frequent encounters with the Blessed Virgin Mary, who revealed herself as “Nynia wa Jambo,” meaning “Mother of the Word,” which is a synonym for “Umubyeyi w’Imana,” which means “Mother of God.” However, after extensive tests and evaluations by

physicians and Church authorities, the Catholic Church approved and sanctioned only the first three visionaries; Alphonsine Mumureke, Nathalie Mukamazimpaka, and Marie-Claire Mukangano, who attended the 120-student Kibeho High School; an all-girl boarding school, run by three Catholic nuns.

The messages from the Blessed Mother, similar to Fatima, are urgent appeals for the repentance and conversion of hearts, an assessment of the moral conduct of the world, the Blessed Mother’s deep sorrow for the disobedience of all of God’s children, regardless of religion, and the necessity of prayer and conversion before the Final Judgment, which she expresses repeatedly is coming soon. She also talks about how suffering saves, saying: “No one will reach heaven without suffering.”

Similar to the children of Fatima, Alphonsine, Nathalie, Marie-Claire were ridiculed and tormented, with Marie-Claire initially being the most outspoken critic before her own visions began.

Alphonsine, Nathalie and Marie-Claire

On November 28, 1981, Alphonsine was the first to see the Blessed Mother. As news spread throughout Kibeho, the school became concerned of the negative impact Alphonsine’s

actions could have on the school and the village. People began traveling to Kibeho in hopes of seeing a miracle. Yet, at the school, no one believed the girl was seeing anything. One of the school's priests actually gave Marie-Claire encouragement to promote the physical abuse of Alphonsine during her apparitions in an effort to discourage her. Maria-Claire organized a group of girls who pulled Alphonsine's hair, pinched her skin, screamed in her ears, even shone a bright flashlight in her eyes, during the apparition, but nothing caused Alphonsine to blink, flinch or winced in the slightest way.

After hearing that the girls' efforts failed to expose Alphonsine as a fraud, the same priest approached Alphosine during an apparition and stuck a needle into her arm. Again, no response. Ironically, in Kinyarwanda, the native language of Rwanda, Alphonsine's last name, Mumureke, means "leave her alone; she speaks the truth."

Eventually, The Pressure Became Too Much for Alphonsine

Alphonsine asked the Blessed Mother if she could appear to more children so that those at the school would believe her. So, on January 12th, 1982, the Blessed Mother began to appear to Nathalie, which only made Marie-Claire angrier and more

determined to expose both girls as frauds.

Yet, the Blessed Mother had plans for the little "doubting Thomas," and on March 2nd, 1982, the Blessed Mother chose Marie-Claire as the third visionary. Now Marie-Claire was filled with shame and humility.

In one of the first visions, Marie-Claire was given a message for the same priest who encouraged her to torment Alphonsine. She approached the priest and said, "The Blessed Mother told me to tell you that you've been unjustly tormenting her children and must do penance. She wants you to knell down tonight, hold your arms open to God, and pray your rosary three times."

The priest viewed Marie-Claire's statement as insolence, and called her a liar. He ordered her to remain in her dormitory until morning when he would administer her punishment.

That night, before going to bed, the priest recalled the Blessed Mother's message. Although he didn't believe these apparitions, he saw no harm in saying a few extra rosaries. Telling no one, he drew all the curtains so that no one could see him, and he prayed just as the Blessed Mother had instructed. When he finished praying, he laid the rosary in the nightstand draw, placed some books and magazines on top of the rosary, and closed the drawer.

The next day when the priest met with Marie-Claire to pronounce her punishment, she greeted the priest with another message, saying that the Blessed Mother was pleased that he prayed the previous night as she asked. However, the Blessed Mother wanted the priest to know that he should never throw his rosary in a drawer and cover it with books and magazines. She said the rosary should be with you at all times, and that it should be prayed every day. From that moment forward, the priest was humbled and became a believer.

The Blessed Mother Allowed the Visionaries to See the Future

On August 19, 1982, the Blessed Mother gave the girls visions that are now believed to have been in part a prophecy of the Rwandan genocide. With witnesses present, the visionaries screamed in horror as they saw in a vision, trees in flames, a river of blood flowing with corpses which had been decapitated and floating limbs of people. Our Lady warned the children that this world is “on the edge of catastrophe.” The accurate account of their vision was recorded as follows:

“A river of blood, people were killing each other, abandoned corpses with no one to bury them. A tree all in flames, bodies without their heads. There was crying and screaming. At

different times, all seven of the Kibeho visionaries experienced this horrifying vision. They saw a river of blood that formed because people were killing each other indiscriminately. “Corpses, some without heads, were strewn everywhere and were so numerous they could not be buried.”

Rwanda is comprised of two predominate tribes: Hutu and Tutsi. On April 6, 1994, after the plane of the Hutu President Habyarimana crashed, the violence against the Tutsi began almost instantaneously. Fueled by Hutu extremists that blamed the Tutsi minority for the country’s social, economic, and political problems, in less than 100 days, Hutus systematically massacred between 800,000 and 1 million Tutsis, or anyone sympathetic to the Tutsis. They savagely dismembered and mutilated their victims. To further degrade the Tutsi, Hutu extremists would not allow the Tutsi dead to be buried. Their bodies were left where they were slaughtered, exposed to the elements, eaten by rats and dogs.

Why is the “Mother of the Word” Still Relevant Today?

The message that Our Lady gave to Marie-Claire on March 27, 1982 was this:

“If I am now turning to the parish of Kibeho it does not mean I am

concerned only for Kibeho or for the diocese of Butare or for Rwanda, or for the whole of Africa. The world is bad. The world rushes toward its ruin. It's about to fall into an abyss. The world is in rebellion against God. Many sins are committed. There is no love and no peace. If you don't repent and convert your hearts, all will fall into an abyss."

The world is bad.

The world rushes towards its ruin.

The world is in rebellion against God.

Nothing has changed on this earth since the Kibeho visions ended in 1989. The tragedy in Nairobi, Kenya, is but a mere reminder of similar tragedies around the world in the last 24 years, such as the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City. We live in a world where human life is not valued from the moment of conception until natural death, and we act shocked when people rise up against and kill one another in retaliation for perceived injustices, political gain or religious domination. And this devaluing of life is present in all countries, among all races of people, and within all forms of professed religions.

During the campaign in the 1940's for independence in India, Mohandas Gandhi was quoted as saying, "An

eye for an eye will leave everyone blind."

Is that what we have become – a world of blind children who lack the ability to recognize the ability for compassion and humility that God gave us? Have we lost our ability to discern what is of value in this life and what is not? Like obstinate children, why do we chose not to hear God's voice, thinking any message from Him through the Blessed Mother, Mary, cannot possibly apply to us?

"....blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20:29)