



Novena

for the
Batwa community
of Rwanda

The Batwa community live in rural Rwanda. Native to the Great Lakes region of Central Africa, the Batwa have always lived in harmony with nature. Traditionally, families made a living through selling hand-made pottery and other crafts.

Over the past 100 years, the Batwa community were systematically and forcibly displaced from their land. During the 1994 Rwandan genocide, they suffered horrific persecution; more than 10,000 Batwa were murdered. Today, many still face deep discrimination and struggle to access basic healthcare, education, housing, and safe work.

Through your prayer and support, we stand shoulder to shoulder with our brothers and sisters in Rwanda. We're helping the community access education, build business skills, and advocate for their rights - preserving traditional crafts while creating sustainable incomes.

A better world is possible.

Batwa
community
member,
Rwanda

Our authentic prayers are never solitary; the angels and saints are in constant union with us in prayer.

The practice of novenas is rooted in the biblical account of the Apostles, who, after Christ's Ascension, persevered in prayer for nine days with Mary, awaiting the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). This first Christian novena serves as the model for all novenas of preparation and prayer.

How to pray this novena

Pray one day's set of prayers for nine consecutive days. Each day includes:

- Sign of the Cross
- Introductory prayer
- Reflection & Intention
- Intercessions
- Invocation
- Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be
- Novena prayer
- Sign of the Cross

Introductory Prayer (to be prayed each day):

Come, Holy Spirit, open our hearts to Your compassion and make us one family in Your love. Bless all marginalised communities around the world, especially the Batwa people of Rwanda and all who walk with them in hope. Amen.

Invocation (to be prayed each day):

O Holy Mary, Mother of God, Our Lady of Kibeho, pray for us and for the Batwa community, that through your powerful intercession, their integral human development needs may be met and their dignity upheld. Amen.



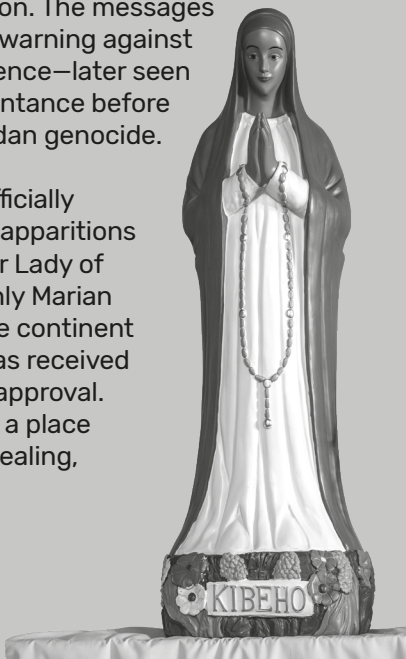
Novena Prayer (to be prayed each day):

God of all peoples,
You create every person in Your image and gather
us into one human family.
Look with love upon the Batwa community of
Rwanda.
Heal the wounded, lift up the oppressed,
and flourish every work that protects dignity,
livelihoods, ancestral lands, health, and hope.
Bless the work of SCIAF and all who work for justice
and peace.
Through the intercession of Our Lady of Kibeho,
guide us in the way of mercy,
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Marian apparitions at Kibeho (1981–1989)

Our Blessed Mother appeared countless
times over an 8 year period to young people
in Kibeho, Rwanda. The Blessed Virgin called
for conversion of heart, deep prayer,
and reconciliation. The messages
also included a warning against
hatred and violence—later seen
as a call to repentance before
the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

The Holy See officially
recognised the apparitions
in 2001, and Our Lady of
Kibeho is the only Marian
apparition in the continent
of Africa that has received
formal Vatican approval.
Today Kibeho is a place
of pilgrimage, healing,
and hope.



DAY 1

His image is dignity

Reflection:

Every person bears God's image and holds human
dignity. (Genesis 1:27; Psalm 139:13–14)

Intention:

We ask for a Rwanda where all people are seen and
heard—especially the Batwa community.

Intercessions:

- For recognition of the dignity and rights of the
Batwa people,
- for SCIAF's partners: wisdom, protection and
fruitful collaboration.

Lord, hear our prayer.



Batwa
community
member,
Rwanda

DAY 2

His call is justice

Reflection:

Justice is love made public. Displacement and poverty demand solidarity and action. (Micah 6:8; Isaiah 1:17)

Intention:

We ask for ecological and social justice for all.

Intercessions:

- For just laws, fair land access, and secure housing for the Batwa community,
- for honest officials and community leaders who serve the common good.

Lord, hear our prayer.



Batwa pottery,
Rwanda

DAY 3

His heart is mercy

Reflection:

Christ is present in those who hunger or are sick, strangers, the vulnerable and the overlooked. (Matthew 25:35–40; Proverbs 31:8–9)

Intention:

We ask for improved access to education and healthcare for Batwa children and families.

Intercessions:

- For accessible healthcare and protection from preventable disease and hunger,
- for strength and safety for health workers and carers serving the Batwa community.

Lord, hear our prayer.

DAY 4

His way is perseverance and hope

Reflection:

Prayer keeps hope alive. After generations of displacement, perseverance becomes a daily grace. (Luke 18:1–8; Romans 12:12)

Intention:

We ask for an end to discrimination and prejudice against the Batwa community.

Intercessions:

- For all marginalised communities around the world,
- for resilience and endurance for all community leaders.

Lord, hear our prayer.

DAY 5

His body is one

Reflection:

In Christ we belong to one Body. No member can say to another, I have no need of you. (Acts 4:32; 1 Corinthians 12:12–27)

Intention:

We ask for unity, strong leaders and advocates within the Batwa community.

Intercessions:

- For unity in the Church and society, walking shoulder to shoulder with the Batwa community,
- for inclusion in decision-making and the building of friendships across communities.

Lord, hear our prayer.

DAY 6

His strength is our courage

Reflection:

Nothing can separate us from Christ's love. In Him, we find strength and courage to take steps forward and put our faith into action. (Romans 8:31–39; Philippians 4:13)

Intention:

We ask for peace and reconciliation in Rwanda.

Intercessions:

- For freedom from every form of violence, exploitation, and abuse,
- for peace around the world.

Lord, hear our prayer.

DAY 7

His spirit is our advocate

Reflection:

The Holy Spirit defends, consoles, and empowers – turning fear into witness and weariness into courage. (John 14:16–17; Acts 1:8)

Intention:

We ask for the Holy Spirit's protection over marginalised communities around the world.

Intercessions:

- For boldness to speak for justice and gentle hearts to build peace,
- for the work of SCIAF and all those supporting Batwa families.

Lord, hear our prayer.



Batwa community meeting,
Rwanda

His mother is our mother

Reflection:

Our Lady, Mother of the Church, notices what is lacking and points us to her Son. We entrust family life and culture to her care. (John 2:1-11; Luke 1:46-55)

Intention:

We ask for the arts, language, and traditions to be honoured and fairly valued around the world.

Intercessions:

- For the spiritual wellbeing of the Batwa community,
- for potters, artists, and craft cooperatives in Rwanda: safe tools, fair markets, and protection of traditional craftsmanship.

Lord, hear our prayer.



Theogene and Anastasia,
Rwanda

His promise is our future

Reflection:

God's plans are for peace and a hope-filled future. He will wipe every tear from our eyes. (Jeremiah 29:11; Revelation 21:3-4)

Intention:

We ask for a renewed sense of hope and flourishing for all Batwa people.

Intercessions:

- For sustainable small businesses that lift families from extreme poverty in rural Rwanda,
- that the love from SCIAF supporters brings hope and light where there is darkness.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Concluding prayer

Lord God, we thank You for Your steadfast love.
Receive the intentions we have offered.
Bless the Batwa community of Rwanda.
We thank You for the grace to stand in solidarity
with all those who are oppressed and marginalised.
Sustain the work of SCIAF and all who serve justice
and peace.
Complete what is lacking within us and keep hope
alive.
Through the intercession of Our Lady of Kibeho,
may we be united in Christ.
Amen.



Batwa community
welcome dance,
Rwanda

Your support helps SCIAF and our partners accompany the marginalised communities in rural Rwanda: preserving traditional crafts, growing small businesses, improving access to healthcare and education, and upholding human dignity.

sciaf.org.uk/pray

Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund

SCIAF is the official relief and development agency of the Catholic Church in Scotland and a proud member of the Caritas family. 196 Clyde Street, Glasgow, G1 4JY. Tel: 0141 354 5555. Scottish Charity No: SC012302. Company No: SC197327. Photos by Colin Hattersley.

