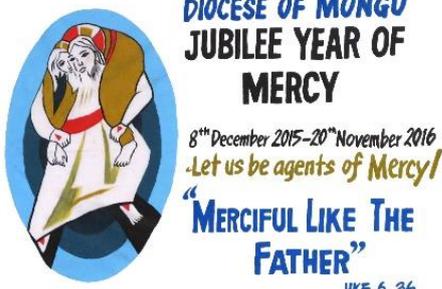


## [A Pilgrimage of Mercy: St. Gabriel Parish, Namushakende, Zambia.](#)

By **K. C. Mukamba**, Secretary, Namushakende Parish.

St. Gabriel's Parish in Namushakende has not been left out in answering the Holy Father's Pope Francis call to celebrate with joy the Jubilee Year of Mercy. On Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2016, a total of 58 parishioners, male and female, young and old, accompanied by our Parish Priest, Alfred Awogya and Alain-Christian Muhineza, his Assistant, embarked on the long awaited spiritual journey. This pilgrimage took us to *Our Lady of Lourdes Cathedral* in Mongu where the door of mercy has been opened for all Christians. The cathedral is about 25 km from our parish centre in Namushakende. The aim was to pass through the door of mercy; to encounter and celebrate the mercy of God so that to become the visible signs of God's mercy to our brothers and sisters. The day was filled with prayers and fasting as well as talks and sharing.



Mr Mbikusita Lewanika led us in a deep reflection on God's mercy and our Christian responsibility towards all people. He enlightened us on the seven corporal works of mercy being: feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, visiting the imprisoned, sheltering the homeless, visiting the sick and burying the dead (Mt. 25: 35-40). He also talked about the seven spiritual works of mercy: to admonish the sinner, to instruct the ignorant, to

counsel the doubtful, to comfort the sorrowful, to bear wrongs patiently, to forgive all injuries and to pray for the living and the dead. This reflection was very touching and challenging. We still have a lot of work to do in our Christian journey! We pray for spiritual strength.

Father Francis, the Parish Priest of St. Lawrence, Limulunga, prepared us for the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation by helping us understand and meditate on Luke 15:11-32; the parable of the prodigal son. At the end of his inspiring and challenging reflection, we all felt that we have gone astray like. We all need to return to the merciful father who is always ready to receive us. Confessions lasted for two hours.

We concluded our pilgrimage of mercy with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist presided over by Father Francis and assisted by our Parish Priest.

We thank God for the wonderful experience of faith and his boundless love and mercy. We, the parishioners of St. Gabriel, Namushakende, feel that we have been charged with a responsibility; a mission to go and proclaim God's mercy but above all to be visible instruments of mercy in places where we live and to be MERCIFUL LIKE THE FATHER.

We thank Pope Francis for awakening in us the fire of God's mercy. We feel commissioned to spread the good news of the mercy of God. We left the cathedral happy and re-energised, glad to have had the privilege to celebrate the mercy of God in our lives. We returned home rejoicing!