



shows that the number is at least four thousand. It seems an exaggerated figure but that's the promising reality of it. In fact, the preference now is to talk about ministers instead of catechists.

To look more closely at the phenomenon, we can picture this scenario. The priest comes to a community one Sunday (called a centre, because it brings together several nearby villages).

The baptism catechist speaks to the parents and godparents who have been preparing for the sacrament. The paperwork is done by the catechist.

The marriage catechist does similarly for couples preparing for their wedding.

Another catechist presents a sheet with a carefully prepared list of the Mass servers.

The music catechist has written down all the hymns to be used at Mass.

The children's catechist already has them organised in the pews, singing or acting out biblical scenes.

The ushers have prepared the decoration of the church, and along with their wives they have already prepared the lunch for the whole assembly.

After Mass, several catechists (adult or youth) go to the microphone to inform the community about upcoming meetings or activities.

It is clear that the future of missionary vitality lies in this legion of generous catechists. The challenge is to provide a solid formation, so they can successfully express the essential content of Christian faith in their own culture.

There have been various efforts in this regard. Young catechists in December prepare the courses to teach the following year. Along with the priest they identify the most important issues. They then develop the content as a team, develop training materials and schedule the group meetings. It is admirable the way they show their ability to give life to the faith. There is nothing of the tedious, classic boredom that the word 'catechetics' sometimes evokes.

