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*The Catechist In
Mission Countries*



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The Society for the Propagation of the Faith will give information to charitable persons interested in the training and support of catechists for mission countries. It will assume all responsibility for the transmission of donations for that object and will see that the intentions of the donors are faithfully carried out.

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A FOREWORD

The object of this pamphlet is to acquaint friends of the missions with an institution unknown amongst us, that of the catechists. Few people understand its nature and necessity in mission countries. They look upon these auxiliaries of the priest as some kind of Sunday School teachers, whereas they occupy an entirely different place. With us the priest is everything in the parish, and in case of emergency can attend personally to every part of the work; in fact, many pastors of small parishes in the South and Far West are working unaided. Such cannot be the case in pagan countries. Without a catechist the missionary can do practically nothing for the conversion of the people, whereas a well-trained catechist, even if left alone, can do a great deal for the diffusion of the Gospel. Owing to the shortage of missionaries caused by the war, there is at present a great demand for catechists, but the means of training and supporting them are lacking.

In order to interest our people in this most deserving work, we have asked two eminent missionaries for comprehensive articles on the subject: Bishop Demange, P.F.M., Vicar Apostolic of Taikou, and Fr. Aroud, C.M., of the Vicariate Apostolic of Che Kiang, China. Their remarks apply not only to Corea and China, but to any part of the missionary world.

JOSEPH FRERI.

CATECHISTS

RIGHT REV. F. DEMANGE, P.F.M.

A CATECHIST is a native who serves as intermediary between the missionary and the people who are to be led to conversion.

This intermediary is indispensable. Every missionary has a triple rôle to fill; he must receive the friendly persons who come to visit him; he must go to see the pagans who will not approach him; he must sustain the Christians whom he has baptized. To perform this triple task the apostle without catechists is a workman without tools.

I. RECEIVING NATIVES WHO COME TO THE MISSIONARY

In the Gospel we read about the Gentiles who, wishing to address Our Lord, besought Philip to present them to Him. If the pagans who become conscious of a desire to know something about religion were obliged to speak personally with the priest, the number of those who would find courage for the interview would be extremely small. Moreover, this personal contact would have its inconveniences.

For instance—Among those who come to see the missionary are many of absolutely good intention, but there are others who wish only to exploit him. Being a stranger to all, the priest may take the second class for the first, or what would be a graver matter, the first for the second. The catechist, a man of the people, knowing the families and their antecedents well, can discreetly separate the sheep from the goats, and thus avoid much unpleasantness and loss of time.

Again—The conversion of a pagan is not brought about in a quarter of an hour, nor in twenty quarters of an hour. It is necessary to chat about religion, and incidentally many other subjects, deliberately, smoking a pipe the while, in the usual unhurried Oriental fashion. These preliminaries the native absolutely demands, and the missionary, burdened with a thousand cares, is not the man for the situation. Here the catechist comes in—a son of the soil, familiar with every custom.

In the case of possible hypocrites, or those wishing to approach the mission merely for ulterior purposes, discrimination must be of a very delicate nature, and naturally involves a profound knowledge of native characteristics, mentality and every shade of the

language. Even after long years of residence in a country, no foreign priest could equal a native catechist in discrimination, and would be open to committing grievous errors.

Also, when the pagan, having become a catechumen, has spent a certain length of time with Christians and begins to understand what would be required of him in the Christian life, he passes more easily over the seemingly difficult steps if in touch with one of his own nationality, of whom he stands in no awe.



The confidence and respect with which the catechumens regard the European or American priest—always a stranger to a certain extent—will be increased if the latter stands a little on his dignity and appears solely as an ambassador of Christ. In the beginning, as in the time of the primitive Church, he ought to give his time solely to the task of explaining Catholic dogma. If whoever felt so inclined could run to the priest's house as to an inn, and chat a while, under the pretext of gaining information on religious matters, the missionary would soon lose prestige, and would be regarded as merely a curious being whose beard, garments and other European attributes were worth seeing. Not only the higher class, but the humbler, are attracted by a man of whom they can exclaim: "He is a real noble." On the other hand, were the priest over-familiar, high and low would shrug the shoulder and say: "In his own country he did not belong to the nobility." Therefore, wisdom and diplomacy require that first acquaintance be made with the catechist, with the understanding that serious-minded neophytes may always talk with the Father on legitimate subjects.

The well-trained catechist also acts as secretary to the missionary. Social demands require the latter to pay visits to the local authorities and exchange letters with them, often of an official nature. As confidential secretary the catechist accompanies his master on ceremonious calls and conducts his correspondence in the manner required by native etiquette. Nor is this a sign of inadequacy on the part of the missionary; the better educated he himself is, the more he realizes the need of a social secretary.



And here is another point rarely touched upon, but most vital to the success of the apostolate: the catechist is a living witness to the sobriety and abstemiousness of the missionary's life. The priest is a stranger whose celibacy is hardly credible to pagans, and indeed they are often slow to believe in it.

But the catechist is the priest's inseparable companion ; he dwells in the same house ; he sleeps in the next room ; he goes with him on journeys ; he is ever at the side of this unique person who is so apart from other men, and he can truthfully give testimony to the perfection and self-denial of the apostolic life.

Men who serve in this capacity are the catechists of the first class, and they are indispensable, not only at the founding of a mission, when they must act as interpreters and general factotums, but always and ever ; the foreign missionary deprived of such services is isolated and without influence over the people whom he has come so far to evangelize.

In some districts the catechist engaged largely in domestic service in the priest's house, and as sacristan, is called a servant. This is a mistake, for if this same helper is obliged to come into contact with pagans, they feel themselves slighted. In fact, it has happened that pagans of the higher class refused to visit the mission because they said they were received by the domestic. If the missionary's poverty forces him to use his catechist as his house assistant, he should always see that the catechist's true title is maintained.

II. VISITING NATIVES WHO DO NOT COME TO THE MISSIONARY

The missionary is a conqueror, but his conquests would be few in number were he to await at home those who wish to give themselves to his dominion. No, it is necessary to go out and search for subjects and bring them into the kingdom of Truth.

But this going out into the midst of the enemy is not always an easy matter. Just because he is a stranger and a priest he will not be admitted to many homes, or if he is received it will only be with coldness or distrust.

Here, as in situations previously cited, the catechist, familiar with language, habits and temperaments, becomes invaluable. Even if the missionary devoted all his time to apostolic journeys and were able to overcome difficulties of speech, etc., he would accomplish little, as he could not, in the vast territory allotted to him, reach any great proportion of the natives often enough to do them lasting good.

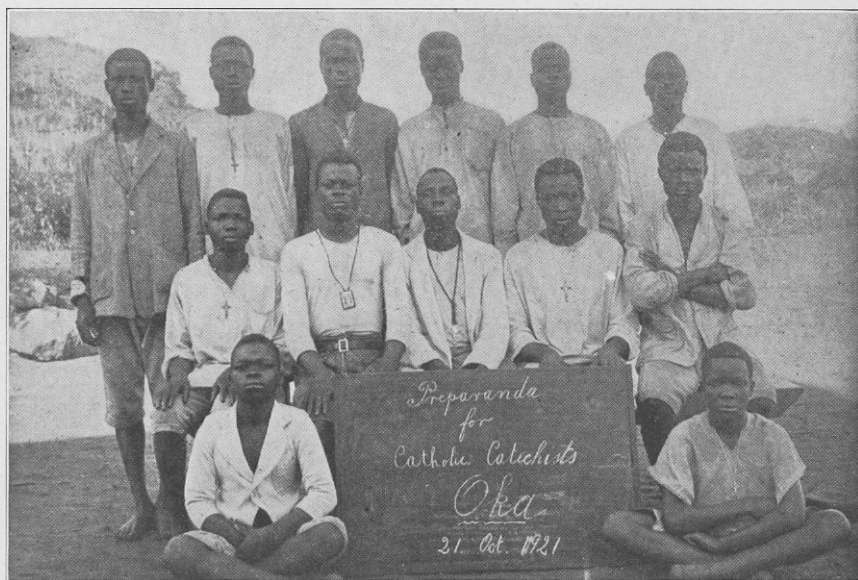
Therefore if one catechist can accomplish much in a mission district, many catechists can accomplish a correspondingly greater amount of good.



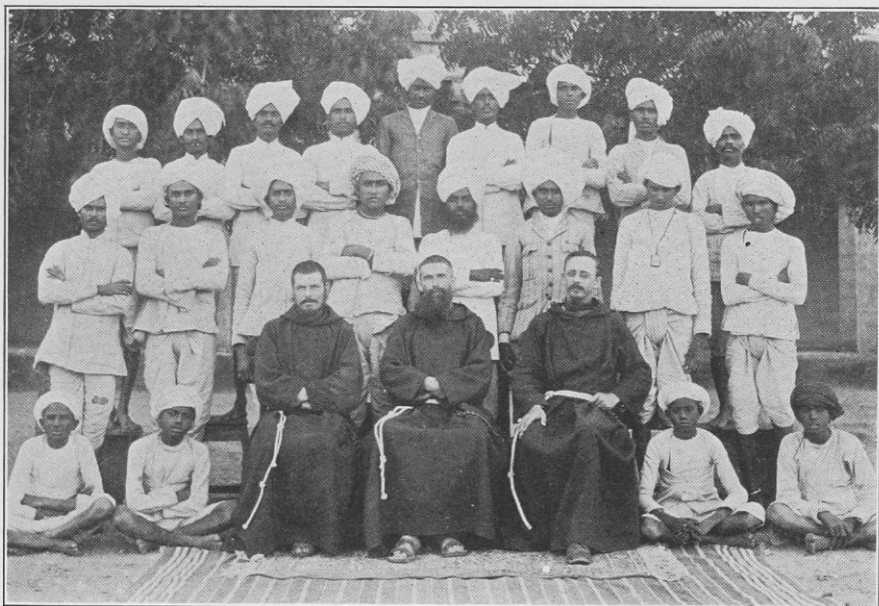
The work of conversion belongs, properly speaking, to the preaching catechist ; that is, the catechist who has been especially



A NATIVE JAPANESE PRIEST OF TOKYO AND HIS CATECHISTS.



A CATECHIST'S SCHOOL IN AN AFRICAN MISSION.



CATECHISTS AND SCHOOL TEACHERS TRAINED BY THE FRANCISCANS IN INDIA.



THESE HIGHLY INTELLIGENT LOOKING CHINAMEN ARE ALL CATECHISTS ATTACHED TO THE MISSION AT CHEEFOO, SHANTUNG, CHINA.

selected, trained and recompensed for this work, and it is this class that is usually referred to by priests when they urge the need of a larger staff of coadjutors.

There are few mission countries whose inhabitants absolutely refuse the Gospel. This being so, the slowness with which conversions are made may be traced directly to the lack of native preaching catechists. The success of Protestant missions is due directly to their large companies of lay assistants whom they are at liberty to hire at will, and to whom they can pay adequate salaries.

Among us Catholics the insufficiency in number and in quality of our catechists is due to our poverty. Being able to pay only starvation wages, we must often put up with men who are incapable of earning a livelihood in any other walk of life, or who are obliged to do other work beside their missionary preaching and teaching in order to live. In either case they are not fitted to bring the light to obdurate pagans.

In order, then, to procure and maintain good preaching catechists it is absolutely necessary to found schools for their education, and to have a fund which shall assure them proper maintenance when trained. These schools should have the stability of a seminary with the difference due to the social condition of the students, who should preferably be married men. In the schools the catechists would not only receive a first complete preparation for their work, but would return to them regularly for periods of rest and refreshment.

By guaranteeing proper living conditions to catechists and their families, it is possible to secure men of ability and presence, and they in turn would have a personal interest in exerting all their power to retain their position.

Domestic catechists include only men, but among the preaching catechists should be numerous women, who alone, among Oriental people, may meet their own sex. The "Bible women" of the Protestant missions are some of their best agents. Therefore female catechists should be trained by the communities of nuns usually found in the larger stations.

Again, as the preaching catechists fill a double rôle—securing conversions and instructing catechumens—it would be advantageous to have separate catechists for the separate functions. Different characteristics, for instance, youth and activity, should mark the catechists who must travel continually from village to village, from those who remain fixed in localities and whose work is to instruct and organize converts already secured.

III. MAINTAINING CHRISTIANS IN THE PRACTICE OF THEIR FAITH

It is not enough to conquer the enemy; equally necessary is it to safeguard those taken from the toils of Satan. The ideal scheme would be to have a priest at the head of each station, but at present one missionary frequently has half a hundred posts under his supervision, widely separated, and at certain seasons of the year inaccessible. There must then be resident in such stations a sort of lay clergy, namely, catechists. The influence of these men is more deeply felt than that of the priest himself. A hard-working, well-educated catechist means a flourishing Christian centre, and an inefficient catechist presupposes a poor community, this in spite of the missionary in charge.

Resident catechists are also required to come to the head station for annual retreats, and as the journeys involved are often long and costly, the missionary must consider the item of traveling expenses as an important one when reckoning the salaries of his catechists.

CONCLUSION

From what I have written, it is plain to the lay reader that there are three kinds of catechists in the mission world—the catechist who lives in the priest's house and acts as his companion; the preaching catechist whose function is to excite pagans to a desire for conversion and to instruct those so inspired; the resident catechist who takes charge of Christian communities in places remote from the head station. Of the first type the missionary must possess at least one, of the second as many as possible, and of the third a number to correspond with the number of his stations.

He can get the services of such men only by paying for them—entirely for the two first, and partially in the third case. It must not be supposed that catechists are mercenary, far from it, but like the priests, they are men and not angels, and therefore require food, raiment and shelter. When the catechist is married he must also guarantee the well being of his family.

The missionary, then, may be considered a farmer with a large piece of land to cultivate: if he has few farmhands and only primitive implements, he is not going to get much good out of his big farm. With a large staff of helpers he is like the fortunate agriculturist who commands up-to-date machinery—a splendid harvest is assured.

All missionary bishops are desirous of a native clergy and with reason; but without catechists, native priests will be as helpless as their foreign companions. They may perhaps dispense with

the household catechists, but cannot expect results without the other assistants.

It is easy to see, therefore, that the entire question of catechists resolves itself into a matter of dollars and cents. It is a tangible fact that in mission countries where the sects work side by side with the Catholics, the success of the former can be traced to their admirable organizations of lay helpers, both men and women, organizations owing their solidity to their financial wealth. What could the Catholic priests not do if, with the truth they preach, they had also adequate lay assistance?

Hoping that the generous Catholics of Christian countries may be moved to help the missions by means of catechists, I will add to these remarks some practical conclusions.



What is the cost of maintaining a catechist in a mission? It is impossible to give a comprehensive answer to this question for many reasons. In the first place, the cost of living is not the same in all countries. It is higher, for instance, in India or Japan than in China. Furthermore, since as we have seen there are several classes of catechists, it will take a larger sum to support the man or woman who gives his whole time to the work and consequently cannot engage in any remunerative labor than to compensate the man who simply presides at prayer meetings on Sunday in the absence of the priest, and practises his trade or cultivates his farm during the week. As a matter of fact, the latter class of catechists receive merely a nominal remuneration, and sometimes none at all. Again, the unmarried catechist, who lives with the priest, shares his lodging and food, costs much less than the one who has his house and must support a family. In certain poor missions, the priest may engage the services of a catechist for a few months only, or even a few weeks, to help prepare a First Communion or confirmation class, and naturally his salary will be in proportion with his work. Again, in certain places, a little revenue may be gotten from the mission stations themselves, in which case a lesser sum will secure the helper.

This will explain the widely different figures quoted by missionaries in their appeals for alms to support their catechists. Whilst some claim that a sum of three dollars a month, or even less, will suffice, others state that twenty dollars a month, or more, is needed. These statements may be absolutely correct, but they come from various parts of the world where prices are different, and their authors have not the same class of catechists in view. For such reasons it is impossible to establish a regular scale as to the cost of supporting a catechist in the missions.

Benefactors intending to share in that most deserving work should either place their alms in the special fund which the Propagation of the Faith is holding for that purpose, and distributes at regular intervals, or if they are specially interested in a certain country obtain from the directors of the Society information regarding the cost of supporting a catechist in that part of the field, and then leave all matters regarding the selection and adoption of catechists to the bishop instead of personally designating the missionary to whom their alms should be assigned. They may have received a letter from that missionary or read his appeal in some magazine and have naturally become interested in him. But they know nothing of his relative needs: all missionaries are in need, and nearly all think, in perfect good faith, that they are among the neediest. Furthermore, that appeal may have been read by hundreds of people and received a number of answers. Therefore, leave the bishop free to choose the catechist and place him where he is most needed at the moment. In the encyclical letter on the missions, *Maximum Illud*, the Holy Father advised this confidence in the bishops.

I must also ask our benefactors to be patient if they do not see the results of their sacrifices promptly. Before he is sent forth, the catechist must be equipped for the battle. He must be trained in a catechist school. It may happen that the young man chosen does not prove to have a vocation for that kind of life, and a new candidate must take his place. All this means an expenditure of time and money with which our friend at a distance will have to forbear.



Finally I will say that if the Church is not making greater progress among infidels and pagans, it is because the number of workers is totally insufficient, and more especially because our catechists are not numerous enough. In many regions there are thousands of catechumens waiting instruction for the reception of the sacraments; they are well disposed, but should not be kept waiting too long. In many other places there are large numbers of baptized Christians who stand in need of the support of catechists in their daily life, that they may not lapse again into pagan ways.

The trouble is that Catholics in Europe and America do not realize how all-important catechists are to the success of a mission; they place the work of catechists as of secondary importance while it really takes first place. Almost nothing can be accomplished without these able and devoted assistants.

American Catholics, give to the support of catechists!

FURTHER LIGHT ON THE SUBJECT OF CATECHISTS

REV. CYPRIAN AROUD, C.M.

Pursuing the subject of catechists, we are now enabled to learn something of the intimate personal life of these important members of the Apostolate—how they are chosen and trained, and the careful manner in which they are watched and guarded when in active service.

I. SELECTION OF CATECHISTS

VERY rarely is the little orphan who is brought up at the mission without care for the future, fit for the office of catechist. He is ignorant of the struggle for existence, and he is not armed for the combat. He lacks the family training and the personal experience of life outside. He lacks above all the experience of suffering and the keen realization of the difficulties of gaining an honest livelihood. He lets himself be pushed too easily into his career without appreciating at its true value the rôle which has been confided to him and which he has not sufficiently desired. The child of "old Christians," brought up entirely in our schools, which he has never left, is likewise rarely fitted for this office, particularly if his parents have some little fortune. He has not had occasion to struggle, and difficulties discourage him. We get most of our catechists from our country schools kept by the catechists themselves.

These children who must work to assist their families at the same time that they study, and who see their fellow-students learning arduous trades or going to labor in the fields, reflect on their future, compare the positions that await them, then their thoughts often turn to the office of catechist, which they are able to appreciate.

They ask to study longer than the others; they are told to watch over themselves more diligently; they become the leaders in the school in study as well as in piety; they try to show themselves capable of fulfilling the rôle of which they dream. They speak of it to the catechist, and beg their parents to lay it before the missionary. When the priest comes to their village, they entreat him to admit them into the city school for catechists. They bestir themselves to attain their end, and their parents and the catechist of the place unite to persuade the missionary.

The latter after making many objections allows himself to be persuaded. He admits the child into the school at the residence, in the rank of an ordinary pupil, exacts a little sum for his maintenance and says over and over again that he reserves the final decision until later. The child arrives at the school; he has a definite end, and he labors to attain it. He knows that amongst his comrades there is competition for this same office of catechist; and therefore a helpful rivalry is established.



Such boys are the best recruits for the school of the catechists. I may add what experience shows me, namely, that among the children of this category, the newly converted give the best promise. Generally speaking, they show more ardor in the study of religion and in piety; they have above all more communicative fervor, more zeal in defending their religion and in preaching it, in giving forth the treasure of grace which they have just found, and which they seem, exteriorly at least, to appreciate more than the children of "old Christians."

We find good catechists also among those new converts who have some rudiments of education and to whom we give a post as school teacher either at the mission or in a distant Christian village. These men know that if they become capable of preaching they may be able to obtain the office of master in a catechist's school, in which case their salary will be greater. Thus they study, they question, they endeavor to convert their friends and acquaintances, and really succeed often in acquiring all the dispositions, aptitudes and religious instruction which we desire in our catechists. We have obtained excellent recruits in this way.

Finally there are persons who reach the post of catechist naturally, as it were, and without having followed the ordinary course. In a case of pressing necessity, when no well-informed catechist is at hand, the choice falls on some good and well-instructed Christian. The trial is made—if it succeeds there is another catechist ready made; if he does not give satisfaction, he is dismissed.

II. THE FORMATION OF A CATECHIST OR HIS PREPARATION

All the young men of our central school receive sufficient formation to become catechists. Student for at least three years, a catechist must be pious, have enough knowledge of Chinese literature to keep a little school, and not show himself inferior to the pagan schoolmasters. He must know well his religion that he may ably defend it against attack. Hence he studies the books

used in the pagan schools, and besides these, the Catechism, Bible History, controversial works, and those treating of Apologetics; moreover, he learns by heart the Gospel, the foundation of the Faith and basis of all controversy with the Protestants. Religious instruction is given daily at the schools, and there is likewise a class in Sacred Scripture, *i. e.*, the literal explanation of the texts of the Gospels. The pupil must show himself pious, obedient, diligent, quick, else he may cherish no hope of the post of catechist.

His education at the school being completed, the young would-be catechist becomes sacristan at the mission and follows the missionary on his apostolic journeys. With the priest, he visits the Christian communities, sees the catechists at work in each place, listens to the counsels of the missionary, assists at all the mission exercises; in a word, he does not leave the Father. While traveling, he studies some useful books, and thus avoids the danger of days passed in idleness. On returning to the residence, he must hand in each week a theme on some religious subject; this is corrected and returned to him. He remains three years at the task of following the missionaries. A small salary, sufficient for his clothing and other needs, dispenses him from the obligation of having recourse to his parents.



Generally during his third year in this office, the catechist-to-be becomes engaged to some young Christian girl. We insist that the person of his choice shall be pious, well-instructed and capable of becoming a catechist for the women. If during these three years he has given us satisfaction, we promise him a post. He marries then and goes with his wife to take the post assigned. If he has not been satisfactory, he is dismissed or left in the office of sacristan. He may remain indefinitely in this post as follower of the Father if he has not the aptitude for a catechist preacher.

The school teachers desirous of becoming catechist preachers may do so by getting instruction and by aiding in the apostolate, the chief catechist of the locality in which are their schools. The traveling catechists may become catechist preachers by showing all the qualities of an apostle in the chapels which they visit on Sundays.

III. OFFICES FILLED BY CATECHISTS AND THE SERVICES THEY RENDER

At the close of their annual retreat, the catechists reunited around the missionary in his presbytery receive their posts for the coming year. They leave charged with a Christian centre,

composed usually of the faithful scattered through numerous villages having one central chapel where the Christians gather for prayer on Sunday. Wherever the chapel is, there is the home of the catechist and his family. He opens a little school for Christian children and catechumens. However, if the Catholics are numerous and the catechist too busy, the missionary will send him a teacher for the school.

In any case, whether he teaches or not, the catechist must give religious instruction daily. In the chapel he presides at the daily prayers, at the exercises on Sunday, when he explains the catechism to all. In many chapels there are even two instructions each Sunday, one in the morning, the other in the afternoon.

Moreover, the catechist often visits the faithful in their homes, always accompanied, however, by one or two neophytes of the neighborhood. He profits by all occasions, nay, even creates opportunities of completing the religious instruction of the faithful, of preparing catechumens for baptism, of gaining heretics and pagans to the faith.

He baptizes dying infants and catechumens. He prays with the most fervent Christians for the sick and for those possessed, and often obtains such wonderful cures that whole families are converted.

He sees that the Christian marriages are in accord with the law of the Church; he presides at the funeral of the deceased Christians, and, praying with the other faithful, conducts them to their last resting place.

If two Christians have a quarrel, the catechist endeavors to restore peace. If there is some difficulty with the pagans, he tries to arrange all according to justice, but in this case he never intrudes himself. Or if the pagan refuses his mediation, he retires, leaving the affair to the care of others.



In these matters the catechist has no right to any pecuniary reward. In case a gift is made him on account of some affair well arranged, he must take it to the missionary, who disposes of it as he thinks fit. To cut short a host of abuses, we are very severe about money gifts, and in principle a catechist who would receive them unknown to the missionary would expose himself to dismissal *ipso facto*. The catechist has no right to anything but his salary for the affairs of his office; hence it is very important that his salary be in proportion to his needs so that he may live comfortably and face the future without anxiety. The catechist must note in a book all the affairs he settles. He must mark in another register



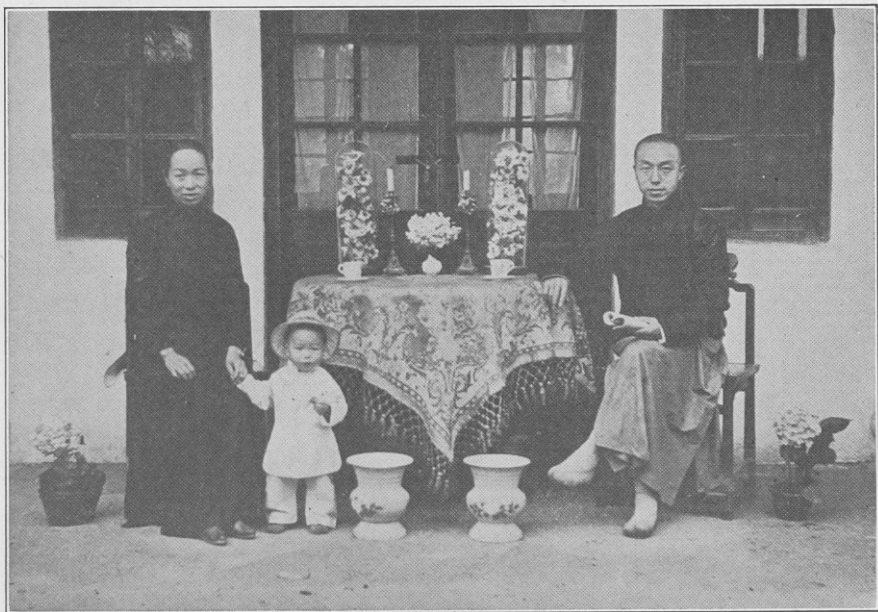
WOMEN CATECHISTS OF EAST SHANTUNG, CHINA.



A MARRIED CATECHIST AND HIS FAMILY IN THE GILBERT ISLANDS, OCEANICA.



FATHER AELEN OF MADRAS (INDIA) AND HIS CATECHISTS.



A VALUABLE MARRIED CATECHIST OF THE LAZARIST MISSION AT HANGCHOW, CHINA.

all the sermons he preaches, indicating the subject and the leading thoughts. Finally in a third register he keeps the names of the persons baptized by him, with the names of the two witnesses; in the same book he notes the marriages and deaths which take place.

Every three months in coming for his salary the catechist brings these three registers to the missionary, who examines them and takes note of what will be useful. Each catechist must present every three months a written theme on such or such a point of doctrine. He must likewise pass an examination on six chapters of the Holy Gospel. As all the catechists come on a fixed day for their wages, they meet at the residence every three months, take the examination on the Gospel and hear the priest's explanations. The missionary then gives useful advice and acquaints himself of all the wants of his district.

IV. INSPECTION OF CATECHISTS—THEIR HIERARCHY

The inspection of the work of the catechists is made by the missionaries, who visit each post twice a year. At the beginning of the year the visit coincides with the preaching of the retreat; at the close of the year the missionary while administering the sacraments decides whether it is well to leave the catechist at that post or send him to another. Towards Christmas all the priests of the district plan out together the best way of placing the catechists according to their aptitudes and the needs of the faithful.

But the inspection of the missionary is distant and very general. It is sufficient for the old catechists, but not for the beginners. Hence we have divided the district into regions, each counting several chapels, some as many as twenty. At the central chapel we place an experienced catechist whom we honor with the title of catechist-general. He does not teach, but he has with him a school teacher who can second him, especially during his absences, which are frequent, since once a month or at least once in two months the catechist-general must visit all the chapels and schools in his region. He is moreover the authorized counselor of all the catechists of the locality and the inspector of all the schools.

He controls all the works of the region. He gathers around him for a week every three months the traveling catechists to help them prepare their Sunday sermons. He indicates every three months to the traveling catechists and to the resident catechists the chapel where they are to preside over the Sunday services, for the catechists do not preside more than two Sundays every month in the same chapel. They alternate and thus supplement and check each other.

The Catechist is Needed in All Missions

The following extract of letters from different parts of the missionary world will confirm the statements of the foregoing writers and show that the conditions as well as the needs of the catechist are pretty much the same everywhere.

From Japan—

The late Fr. Evrard, P.F.M., of Tokyo, wrote :

"One of the chief reasons why our work is hindered is the poverty of the native catechists, who go among many of the people to whom we have not access.

"The lack of resources, also, renders it impossible for us to train a sufficient number of catechists to aid in the extension of the field of evangelization. In Japan especially the catechist has a very important part in the apostolate. He is as the right hand of the missionary, the indispensable auxiliary of the apostle from beyond the seas. There are two methods of attracting the pagan Japanese toward the Faith: one is the system of public conferences that we have inaugurated, the other the establishment of friendly relations between the non-Christians and the catechist.

"At the present time the second method is productive of the more satisfactory results. The catechist, a Japanese, appears to be the instrument chosen by Providence to sow the seed of truth in the minds of his compatriots. His part is similar to the vocation of the disciples of Our Lord, who were sent, two by two, into various localities to prepare the way for Christ's visit to these places at a later period."

From China—

Bishop Prat, O.P., Vicar Apostolic of Amoy, says :

"There is one thing which I deem most necessary and urgent for the speedy development of this mission, and that is a supply of good catechists.

"Anyone who has had experience knows quite well that the priest can do but very little in a new mission without the help of good catechists. On the contrary, with the support of good catechists, he is able to double and treble the success of his labor."

Bishop Henninghaus, S.V.D., Vicar Apostolic of South Shantung, writes :

"The extremely important position which the catechist holds in the missions has, time and again, been demonstrated. In each of the central stations of the vast mission territories entrusted to the care of the Fathers of the Society of the Divine Word, there has long been established a large catechist school. Thus, the institutions at Yenchowfu, China, at Kanazawa, Japan, and at Dailon-Madang, New Guinea, have become famous. In showing the peculiar and imperative need for catechists in China, one also includes, in a general way, the reasons which establish the importance of the position of catechists in all pagan lands."

The late Fr. Botty, B.F.M., of Eastern Mongolia, said :

"In order to make better known to the world an important organization belonging to our apostolate, I beg to mention our female catechists, a band of missionary workers, whose light has been hidden too long. They have already accomplished much valuable work, and their motto is always 'Onward, ever onward!'"

"These virgins are the chosen flowers of the propaganda and are indispensable to our mission. They remain unknown to the outside world till the end of their lives, but for this reason they are deserving of more merit and are even more useful.

"It is the happy privilege of these holy women to care especially for infants; they send legions of little angels to Heaven. Last year they had a magnificent total of one hundred and forty-one baptisms of infants in danger of death, and three hundred and twenty-three adults were also baptized by them. In short, the female catechists are a powerful element for good in our Holy Church, for they open the doors of Paradise to hosts of adults and infants."

From Indo-China—

Right Rev. A. Eloy, P.F.M., Vicar Apostolic of Southern Tonkin, writes:

"The duties of a catechist vary in different posts. Usually the catechists assist the priest in his parochial duties, they teach Christian doctrine, lecture to the Christians, care for the sick, baptize children in distant stations and train the altar boys.

"There are always new groups of Christians forming here and there. These, too, must depend upon the ministrations of the catechist. He must teach them their prayers, catechism, and preside at all religious exercises. Many of the catechists pass the term of their probation in this manner.

"Again, we employ them as professors in our little seminary, or as porters at our door, or superintendents of our farms. In fact, they are to be relied upon to fulfill any emergency in the church, station or home."

From India—

Bishop Sagrada, M.F.M., Vicar Apostolic of Eastern Burma, says:

"To increase the number of our Christian settlements, it is necessary to have many catechists, for how can a missionary, who has to visit thirty or forty villages three or four times a year, have spare time to preach the Gospel to pagan tribes? And while the missionary visits new Christians, the enemy spreads the seed of dissension and apostasy in the villages recently converted. The people, having no instruction and no one who leads them to the observance of the law of God, would fall back into vice again. Without catechists our work is impossible, or, at least, inefficient. A good catechist is the visible guardian angel of his people."

The Rev. T. Gavan Duffy, of Pondicherry, India, expresses himself on this subject in the following words:

"Let it be duly understood:

(a) That a multitude of splendid subjects, full of faith and devotedness and genuinely anxious to find employment in the service of the Church, cannot, for various reasons, be made priests;

"(b) That a priest, with five catechists, can accomplish far more in a district than a priest with an assistant;

"(c) That a catechist is far better able than even a native priest to keep in touch with the Christians and to make friends with the pagans."

From Africa—

Bishop Streicher, W.F., Vicar Apostolic of Uganda, writes:

"Of all human means that second the work of grace in souls, the best results are obtained by the formation of native catechists to assist in the instruction of their fellow-countrymen.

"It is not necessary that the catechist be very intelligent provided that he knows how to read and write. His education will receive attention later. But he must be good and kind and affable to all. In this way, by making himself loved, he will teach those under his charge to love the Master Whose Word he preaches."

Bishop Broderick, L.Af.M., Vicar Apostolic of Western Nigeria, writes:

"Today, perhaps more than at any time in the history of Catholic missions to the pagan, the question of catechists has a very special—I would say a very vital—importance.

"Moreover, as a result of the world-wide war, the ranks of the European clergy has been considerably diminished and for years to come the missionaries for Africa will be necessarily very restricted. In face of such a very regrettable state of affairs, the laborers in the mission field are obliged to rely more and more on trained native helpers."

From Oceanica—

Fr. Aubin, S.M., of the Solomon Islands, says:

"The work of native catechists in the Solomon Islands is of special importance just now because of the many afflictions that have come to its missions during the last few years. Our only hope then is in the native catechists; they are the right arm of the missionary, often the advance guard of the army which the Church sends into a new country.

"They are able to secure an opening for Christianity in certain villages that would be closed to priests, and the converts they make are worthily prepared for their new Faith.

"We are now made welcome in all parts of the islands, the people hold out their arms to us begging to be saved from the claws of Satan, and it is only by means of zealous catechists that we can answer their prayers."

Another missionary from Oceanica writes:

"One of the great cares of the head of a mission is the recruiting of native helpers, men and women, to the manner born, who are acquainted with the language and customs of the people. They alone can give to the Catholic religion, when it is first introduced into their land, the coloring and the tone that will disarm a people naturally suspicious of all things foreign. In vain would whole generations of apostles, though they be saints, labor to ingratiate themselves into the good-will of the people. Religion must bring with it its letters of naturalization—and the letters must be signed with the hand of a black. Such workers are legion in our mission. WE CALL THEM CATECHISTS.

"One of the great attributes of the catechists is his origin, his equality of being a native—I was about to say, his bronzed skin. His example is contagious, his work is forceful, his manner well understood by all. He explains the doctrine to his hearers in a way that makes it bend to their mentality, in a way indeed that no foreigner could imitate."

We conclude these remarks by repeating the appeal of Bishop Demange:

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