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05. Charles Besnard (continued)

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It is a sad thing to be unable to make up my mind. I must turn to you, my God, if I am to make a decision in accordance with your will. I am here to consult your wisdom. Destroy within me all those earthly attachments which follow me wherever I go. Grant that in whatever state of life I choose, I may not have any opinions apart from those which please you. And since it seems to be impossible for me to come to a conclusion, even though I have a strong feeling that this is what you want of me, I have decided to be perfectly open with your ministers and share the problem with them.

(With the help of his spiritual director, Poullart eventually decided on what had always attracted him and which the retreat seemed to confirm: he would be a priest in the ministry. But to guard against any ambition and vanity, he would not be a "career" priest and therefore, he would not go to the Sorbonne. This decision shows how the two parts of this retreat complemented each other.)

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CHARLES BESNARD (continued)

When he arrived in Paris, Claude entered the College of Clermont. (...) In reading the life of Father Le Nobletz,¹ a missionary priest who died in Brittany and was regarded as a saint, he found it a great help in despising the world and surmounting human respect.²

¹ Michel Le Nobletz (1652) undertook the re-evangelisation of Brittany in the first half of the 17th century, with a combination of unlimited pastoral fervour and the practice of rigorous discipline. The Life of M. Le Nobletz, priest and missionary, was written by Fr. Verjus in Paris in 1666, and made a profound impression on the young Claude Poullart.

² Fr. Joseph Michel places great emphasis on the role of the *Assembly of Friends* (AA) in the strengthening of the Christian life of Poullart when he was a young theology student at Louis-le-Grand. Fr. Michel discovered in the Jesuit archives at Toulouse a note that probably refers to Poullart: "Another confrere is supporting a