

THE AUTHOR

Fr. Joseph Michel c.s.sp., was born at Beaucé in Brittany, France, in 1912. His secondary studies were at the diocesan junior seminary of Chateaugiron and then with the Eudist Fathers at Redon. In 1931, he entered the novitiate of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit at Orly, in the outskirts of Paris. After two years of military service, he studied philosophy at Mortain in Normandy followed by four years of theology at Chevilly-Larue, the senior scholasticate of the Spiritans. It was there that he developed his historical interests and published a history of the diocese of Rennes in 1939. Ordained priest in 1939, he taught in the two spiritan establishments of Saint-Ilan and Saint-Michel-en-Priziac before starting university studies at Rennes, culminating, in 1946, with a doctoral theses entitled, "*La Bretagne missionnaire de 1800 à 1940*".

From 1946-1950, he worked in the French Congo, but was then recalled to found and direct the national chaplaincy for overseas students in France (1950-1958). It was at this time that he became actively involved in promoting the decolonisation of French possessions overseas and wrote a series of important articles on the subject, culminating in "*Le devoir de decolonisation*" in 1954. In 1958, the Congregation asked him to use his considerable historical talents to explore the spiritual sources of his own religious family. The result was the publication of this present work on Claude-François Poullart des Places in 1962. This was followed by two books on Blessed Jacques Laval, the spiritan apostle of the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean, and a second work on Poullart: "*L'influence de l'Aa, Association secrète de piété, sur Claude-François Poullart des Places*" (1992). He died on June 23rd, 1996.