Manuel Arrizabalaga Olaizola was born in 1879 in the Basque country near where St. Ignatius was born. He entered the Novitiate at San Sebastian in Spain. From the beginning he demonstrated distinctive culinary talents. So, when the theologate at Oòa needed a cook, Manuel was sent to them. This meant transferring his novitiate from San Sebastian to the theologate. In 1902 Manuel volunteered to work in America and took the steamer to the United States.

Manuel was assigned the cook of the Novitiate in Macon, GA (1903-04). He moved to Loyola University for nearly a decade (1904-14). After the great hurricane, Manuel went to Galveston to assist in the reconstruction of St. Mary’s College (1914-19). He returned to Spring Hill College as manager of the kitchen (1919-21), a job he performed at Jesuit High Shreveport (1921-23). “Go West” he did, first as cook for the Immaculate Conception Parish in Albuquerque, NM (1923-26) and then for the Church of the Holy Family (1926-29). He returned to Spring Hill College in the capacity of horticulturist (1929-30). He was attached to the Missouri Province for five years: one year in St. Louis and four at St. Marys (1931-35).

In time he settled on Brother “ABC” because he failed to get his American brothers to say “Arrizabalaga.” He vigorously supported Franco in the Spanish Civil War, signaling this by banging his cane on the floor. It was the children who were his main work and in their “grown- up” memories he is still alive.

Manuel eventually returned to Grand Coteau as the groundskeeper (1936-42). Shortly he was posted to El Paso TX where he served in three different Jesuit establishments: his chief work as cook for the House of Writers (1942-44), then as the parish’s receptionist (1944-46); and as sacristan. He returned as cook for two years at the House of Writers
(1948-50). He went back to Sacred Heart Church, this time in retirement (1950-54). Finally, Manuel Arrizabalaga was retired to Grand Coteau because of poor health, but he lived another eleven more years as the groundskeeper (1954-65).

On his second day of “retirement” he got a hoe to prepare a playing field for the local children and from that day, all of his efforts were for them. He sold marbles to make money to buy basketballs. He begged old bats and torn balls from the novices and juniors and the repaired them for further service. Truly he suffered the little ones to come to him. He celebrated his diamond jubilee in the Society on July 25, 1957. He died of a heart attack on Dec 13, 1965 at the age of eighty-six. His obituary read: “The New Orleans Province was deprived of the earthly presence of one of its truly unique religious. With no fanfare and as quietly as he had lived his dedicated sixty-eight years of service, Brother ABC passed to his eternal reward.”