

BR. LUIS AROZ PASCUAL 1912 - 2007

[Br. Alain Houry](#), Director of the Archives

The following appreciation of Br Luis Aroz is taken from the Generalate web site. Br James Connolly comments: "According to Brother John Hazel, no mean intellectual himself and archivist in Rome in the seventies, Brother Luis Aroz was the most brilliant researcher into the life of St. John Baptist de La Salle. He died at the age of 95 on 11 November, this year. "

Br. Luis was born in Ágreda, near Soria, in the province of Castilla Vieja, Spain. Luis Antonio Aroz Pascual had a brother, Felix José, who was three years older and who entered the Juniorate and Novitiate of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Irun. Luis decided he too would become a Brother, but as a missionary: this is why he did his formation entirely in French, at the Mother House of Lembecq, in Belgium. On October 6th 1928 he became Br. Léon de Marie.

His intellectual ability and his perseverance in his work allowed him to push his studies in Literature and Theology very far but it was his preparation for his Doctorate in Missiology which he achieved at the Gregorian in 1955, which revealed to his superiors his qualities as a researcher. At their request, instead of going on the missions, he was to devote most of his efforts to discovering, publishing and commenting on in French, the original documents relating to St. John Baptist de la Salle and his family.

Between 1966 and 1981, Br. Léon de Marie Aroz edited the impressive number of 20 *Cahiers Lasalliens* (CL 26-42): in 1991 Br. Michel Sauvage published the detailed list in CL 5 (pp. 160-161). Starting out from CL 40-1, the inventory of the series concerning the Founder, in the Mother House Archives, led him to drawing up, in CL 41-1 (pp.26-27), a vast plan, too vast for a single person. A special issue of *La Salle Intercom* (Jan-Feb. 1980) gives an example of what may be found in this harvest of documents.

"A gifted researcher, Br. Léon proved to be incomparable at tracking down sources. His flair was exceptional but it was thanks to relentless work that he managed to find documents buried in public archives or passed on to families of lawyers. On September 24th 1964, Br. Léon 'stumbled upon' the *Comte de tutelle* (Guardianship accounts) which John Baptist presented showing his management of the family goods after giving up his position as guardian of

his brothers and sisters" (CL 5, p. 161). CL 39 in 1972, allowed him to publish an unpublished letter of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, discovered in Reims, in the study of Maitre Claude Thiénot.

His work on La Salle led him to live for a long time in Rome, Reims and especially Paris (in all, he spent 24 years in the capital). Other works, in Spain, on the seals and arms of the Spanish Bishops, are now in the National Historical Archives of Madrid.

After this break, Br. Louis Marie Aroz, as he henceforth signed himself, took up again, at the request of the Superior-General, Br. John Johnston, the publication of the *Cahiers lasalliens*: in 1983, he finished CL 51 which appeared in 1889; in 1993, the publication of *Dix années de prétoire* (10 years of courtrooms) [CL 52], revealed John Baptist's dealings with his family; CL 53 in 1995 presented unpublished documents (damaged by water during a fire) on Canon Roland, for whom John Baptist de La Salle had been the executor of his will; it was with CL 54 on Jean-Louis, Pierre and Jean-Remy de la Salle, that he ended his publications (10,000 pages) in the *Cahiers lasalliens*. Br. Aroz would later himself publish three books on the different branches of the La Salle family of Reims.

We regret that he was not able to publish the documents which he had collected on the court cases between St. de La Salle and the teachers and on the "Clément affair": this great researcher would not have failed to help us discover, as he often did, unexpected aspects of our Founder and of his time. The whole Lasallian Family owes him a lot.



JEAN-BAPTISTE DE LA SALLE