

## **ALPHONSE HOCH, PRIEST, MUSICIAN, ALSACEIAN**

### **A life dedicated to God, music and Alsace (1900-1967 )**

Extracted from an essay by Gabriel Andres



Alphonse Hoch was born on January 20, 1900, in Erstein. His father, also named Alphonse, was a foreman in the local spinning mill (1869-1951 ). His mother, Maria, née Klein (1875-1951 ), was responsible for his early education.

After attending elementary school in Erstein, young Alphonse entered the episcopal high school in Strasbourg at a relatively early age. Upon completing his secondary studies, he entered the seminary. For several years, he studied music alongside theology, specializing in organ, harmony, and composition. His teachers included Canon Fr. X. Mathias, then superior of the seminary and lecturer in Catholic church music at the University of Strasbourg, as well as, among others, MJ Erb, professor at the conservatory.

In 1923, the student was ordained a priest. As a young vicar, he came to Saint- Louis, to complete his musical studies at the nearby Basel Conservatory. At the same time, he gained his first conducting experience with the local church choir.

However, as early as 1925 he was called to Strasbourg as vicar, to the cathedral, a decisive appointment for him and undoubtedly a well-considered one by the diocese, since he was simultaneously appointed cathedral choirmaster, succeeding Canon Victori. Thus, he immediately and directly came into close contact with the religious and musical life of Alsace.