



Rendering of the proposed interior of the new Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart.

SACRED HEART CONCERNS

It was with some interest that I read the article about the new Sacred Heart Co-Cathedral [Citelines, "The Light Inside," Cite 67]. In your journal, which can be appropriately critical of architectural and design developments in Houston, you surprised me in that the new building came off so lightly.

The local Catholic Church hierarchy had an opportunity to build an edifice for the ages, to exercise the skills of the finest architects in the world, to trigger the spirit of the godly and the godless by designs which elevate the spirit, to put Houston on a par with Chartres, Barcelona, Cologne, or even Los Angeles. Instead, the self-proclaimed simplicity of the edifice is not the simplicity of Matisse's Chapelle du Rosaire in Venice.

As a practicing Catholic, in particular, I was sorely disappointed that the local see did not have the forethought to consult much of the fine talent in the community or elsewhere in developing plans or ideas for this building. Contrast their approach to that of Los Angeles (where the Queen of Angels Cathedral designed by Rafael Moneo is a monument receiv-

ing numerous accolades), San Francisco (where Pietro Belluschi's building remains a distinct icon for the city), or Oakland (where Santiago Calatrava was at least given serious consideration as the designer for the new Cathedral of Light).

In a church whose centuries-old membership includes master artisans, we seem to be relegated in the present to the prosaic and the tedious. It is unfortunate that the catholicity of Catholicism is being challenged in Houston, a city with strong ecumenical roots. The Church should ecumenize also through its employment of talented and visionary architects.

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