

Cathedral for a New Century

The brilliant colors of Fall leaves dazzled in the sunlight and fell gently in the rain. The cluster of academic buildings were carefully set on grid and gothic in detail - perhaps to remind us of the medieval roots of the university. The stage was set and a select gathering of featured speakers brought together. Through the lens of the cathedral – its nature and function – the University of Notre Dame sponsored an intense reflection on *Built of Living Stones*, October 21-23.

Plenary sessions balanced specific case studies of cathedrals, those newly built, recently refurbished or about to be refurbished. General sessions such as those on the historical context or relationship of architectural and liturgical challenges were well-crafted presentations. Others offered more specific insight. The cathedral as an oasis, a place of exchange, hospitality, transformation and beauty, a building in the making, forever incomplete – a metaphor, is the image Cardinal Mahoney sees for the new cathedral in Los Angeles. Bishop Cupich from Grand Rapids, SD spoke from an interesting point of view, suggesting the ministry of the bishop – in service, worship and witness – as the starting point for considerations of a cathedral building. The cathedra – even when empty (sede vacante) – becomes pivotal to all those processions, which mark this church as the spot where the liturgy of the church intersects the liturgy of life. Archbishop Weakland from Milwaukee spoke of the need for clear involvement of the bishop in our building projects and detailed the issues involved in the renovation of his cathedral. We were all impelled from historic considerations to current projects and then into future visioning where Dick Vosko gave an impassioned presentation highlighting a crisis of language which he sees as crucial in the turmoil often affecting cathedral building projects. A challenge in all of our work is to be mindful of how we express our ideas.

The conference was intense and filled with ideas. Time for interactive conversations was minimal in our brief stay, but this may be remedied and the conversation further extended with the upcoming publication of the proceedings of the conference.

Carol Frenning

Note:

[Cardinal Mahony and Architect Jose Raphael Moneo discuss their collaboration on the new Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles in the Los Angeles Times at \[www.latimes.com/features/lifestyle/la-112901cardinal.story\]\(http://www.latimes.com/features/lifestyle/la-112901cardinal.story\) .](http://www.latimes.com/features/lifestyle/la-112901cardinal.story)