religions

MDPI

Article

The Need for Sacred Emptiness: Implementing Insights by Paul Tillich and Rudolf Schwarz in Church Architecture Today

Bert Daelemans

Faculty of Theology, Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 28015 Madrid, Spain; bdaelemans@comillas.edu

Abstract: In a time when the minimalist emptiness of many contemporary church buildings rightly encounters criticism for its incapacity to create a sacred atmosphere, it is good to plead again for sacred emptiness as a religious symbol in its own right. Because this term concerns the apophatic dimension of religion and the importance of mystery and transcendence in daily life, it is not just an important question for architects but for anybody who considers the meaning of religion today. This article recovers first the insights of two thinkers of the twentieth century who pleaded for sacred emptiness, the Protestant theologian Paul Tillich and the Roman Catholic architect Rudolf Schwarz, before examining the fruitfulness of sacred emptiness for church architecture today. The conclusions of this research will be that their approaches are complementary and that their plea for sacred emptiness has gained importance today but must be answered in a new way. Some contemporary case studies of sacred space by renowned architects demonstrate the importance of sacred emptiness. At first, it is still anonymous, but gradually, through the mystagogical interaction with visitors and users, sacred emptiness gains more definite meaning.

Keywords: sacramentality; mystagogy; architecture; Rudolf Schwarz; Paul Tillich; religious symbols; symbolism; art; sacred space; transcendence

check for updates

Citation: Daelemans, Bert. 2022. The Need for Sacred Emptiness: Implementing Insights by Paul Tillich and Rudolf Schwarz in Church Architecture Today. *Religions* 13: 515. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13060515

Academic Editors: Annemarie C. Mayer and Roberto Cipriani

Received: 28 March 2022
Accepted: 30 May 2022
Published: 6 June 2022

Publisher's Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Copyright: © 2022 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

1. Introduction

When is emptiness sacred? When can it be said to be sacred and when is it not? This is not just an important question for architects but for anybody who considers the meaning of religion today. This question concerns the apophatic dimension of religion, the importance of mystery, contemplation, and transcendence in contemporary life, the capacity of emptiness to be a symbol of the invisible divine. Emptiness is indeed a visual symbol for silence, and silence can be experienced in various ways.

This article will discuss this topic in the context of sacred architecture, but it has obviously broader consequences from a philosophical and theological perspective. Is it even possible that such a thing as sacred emptiness exists? Is this a universal phenomenon; will this be experienced by everyone in the same way? What must be achieved by the designers of a building to create something as ineffable as sacred emptiness? For ages, architects, philosophers, and theologians have grappled with this question (Brown 2004; Barrie 2010; Cavarra Britton 2010; French 2022).

The aim of this article will be fairly limited in that it basically recovers the insights of two thinkers of the twentieth century who pleaded for sacred emptiness. There were others, of course, such as the Anglican theologian Peter Hammond (Hammond 1961), but for the sake of this article we will limit ourselves to only two. The first is the Protestant theologian Paul Tillich (1888–1965), who gave lectures on art and architecture near the end of his life. The second is the Roman Catholic architect Rudolf Schwarz (1897–1961), close friend of Roman Catholic theologian Romano Guardini (1885–1968) and writer of a seminal book on church building that is still often overlooked and misunderstood. We will therefore present briefly the core of their thought and examine its fruitfulness for sacred architecture today. As their thinking on sacred architecture is well known and can easily be

found in the literature, there will be no need here to enter into detail, but only to reveal what is concerned with the strictly necessary to expose the importance of sacred emptiness.

It would be interesting to consider the influence of World War I and II on this discussion of sacred emptiness in twentieth-century religious architecture, but this exceeds the scope of this article, whose aim is not historical as such (by retrieving the roots and reasons of sacred emptiness in twentieth-century architecture) but rather practical and contemporary, demonstrating how this concept still needs to be addressed today but in a new way. Preliminary thought-provoking reflections on this topic are provided by (Zahner 1998, pp. 299–333; Struck 2018).

The issue of sacred emptiness was not only important in the twentieth century, in an age of architectural modernism and minimalism, but lately it has become a question in itself: what initially was meant to be sacred has apparently lost its sacredness (van Rooyen 2018). Think only of Schwarz's famous *Corpus Christi* church in Aachen (1930). Schwarz's contemporaries already had difficulties in accepting the sheer emptiness of the building. Even Guardini had to come to its rescue by defending its emptiness as providing meaningful, contemplative, and sacred silence (Guardini 1931). Nevertheless, the resistance to minimalist space seems only to have gained strength today (Barron 2001; Doorly 2007).

Over the years, sacred emptiness has been diluted into mere emptiness, perhaps not objectively so, but something in the relationship between the space and its users has lost its appeal. Perhaps something has changed subjectively in the users themselves, in their capacity to experience the sacredness of emptiness as a symbol for the divine. Hence, can something be achieved objectively, in the architecture itself, to give people again a sense of the sacred?

It is my contention that there is still a need for sacred emptiness today, and probably more than ever. The need for emptiness as a symbol of the sacred seems more acute and universal today than the need to crowd the empty space with religious symbols and images. However, not every empty space is automatically experienced as sacred. Therefore, we will proceed in three steps. Firstly, we will retrieve the meaning of the concept of the sacred void in the thought of Paul Tillich. Secondly, we will present, for the first time in English, Schwarz's first publication, which may be considered as his manifesto for architecture. At the same time, we will retrieve the meaning of sacred emptiness in his primer on church building (1938). Finally, their insights will be examined in relation to recent work by famous church architects such as John Pawson, Jean-Marie Duthilleul, and Peter Zumthor.

The conclusions of this research will be that their plea for sacred emptiness has gained importance today but must be answered in a new way. Emptiness today is not enough. Another result of this research, having retrieved some of the best theological thought at the source of church architecture (as it was understood in the first half of the twentieth century), was the astonishing discovery of its fruitfulness for today. Furthermore, this study confirms that buildings should be examined more as sociological events than as static objects from a neutral, exterior point of view (Brenneman and Miller 2016). Finally, delving into the theological thought of Tillich and Schwarz on this topic, they are complementary in their approaches, especially for the implementation of their insights today.

2. Results: Tillich and Schwarz on Sacred Emptiness

Let us start this itinerary by presenting concisely the thought of both Paul Tillich and Rudolf Schwarz on sacred emptiness. One pleads for this need out of his concern for Protestant church architecture, the other from his desire to create liturgical spaces for Roman Catholic communities.

In his classic *Theology in Stone*, Richard Kieckhefer refers specifically to both scholars when speaking about two related ideas behind the concept of sacred emptiness: "First is the notion (articulated by Rudolf Schwarz) that a church should be a place chiefly for liturgical action, and that the spareness of design and of ornament forces awareness that everything important happening in the church comes not from objects but from actions. [. . .] The second, related reason for 'holy emptiness' is that of Paul Tillich, whose main

theological concern here was the relationship between the sacred and the holy, and the importance of preserving the primacy of the holy and the provisional character of every sacred symbol" (Kieckhefer 2004, p. 273).

2.1. Tillich's Plea for Sacred Emptiness

Paul Tillich's theology of religious architecture is well known and has been studied in recent years; thus, it does not need introduction (Dudley 1995; Reymond 1995, 2001, 2004; Daelemans 2012, 2015b). Therefore, we will move directly to the core of his thought on sacred emptiness and only present the results of this research. Although the following might seem little more than a collection of quotations from his writings, more in-depth studies that retrace this concept in Tillich's thought can be found in the aforementioned publications, which discuss the five mentions of sacred emptiness throughout Tillich's writings (especially Daelemans 2012; 2015b, pp. 237–44).

The German theologian gave his first lecture on art and architecture on American soil in 1952. It was entitled "Art and Society". Here, he suggested that "the most expressive form of art today in connection with religion might be sacred emptiness; an emptiness which does not pretend to have at its disposal symbols which it actually does not have" (Tillich [1952] 1989, p. 40). This seems to be, as far as I know, the first occurrence of this important term in his writings. Tillich uses it when discussing the bridge between art and religion.

Even though proposed tentatively, there are valuable elements to consider in his prophetic comment. Let us name seven of them. First, art and religion must somehow be connected. Second, Tillich looks essentially for expressiveness, whatever that might mean (we will come back at this later). Third, in his view, sacred emptiness seems to be a way to bridge art and religion. Fourth, sacred emptiness is for him the most expressive form to do so. Fifth, sacred emptiness might be the best solution for religious art and architecture of his day. Sixth, he gives a definition of sacred emptiness in relation to religious symbols (objects such as icons, crosses, figurative art, and liturgical furniture). Seventh, honesty and humility seem at the core of this definition because we should get rid of the pretention to have religious symbols which we do not possess, for they have lost their power: many religious symbols are not understood in the way they were historically. This is still true for us today.

Following this statement, Tillich continues and broadens his perspective: "In all realms of life today we must have some emptiness. It can become desperate emptiness; it can become sacred emptiness. We have examples of such sacred emptiness in the history of religious art and in the history of assembly houses among those who are ultimately concerned with each other. On the basis of a preliminary sacred emptiness, something may develop" (Tillich [1952] 1989, p. 40).

To the seven elements noted above, we could now add the following five: eighth, Tillich acknowledges the importance of emptiness not only in church art and architecture, but in all realms of life, because it is a religious symbol in its own right (a symbol of silence and of the need for silence, we could say). Ninth, emptiness is never neutral but might evolve into desperate, nonsensical, dead nothingness or rather an empty space somehow filled with the presence of the sacred. Tenth, what sacred emptiness is can be learned from historical examples. There are still historical examples of buildings that demonstrate the power of an emptiness that is sacred. Eleventh, Tillich defines religious buildings as "assembly houses" for those with an "ultimate concern", his favorite term for the sacred, meaningful dimension of life. Twelfth, as Tillich was always attentive to newness, sacred emptiness seems the preliminary step for something new to develop, for new religious symbols to emerge.

To put this in the context of his theological thought and especially of his theology of art, we must acknowledge (even though for the purpose of this article we cannot address this question properly) Tillich's controversial claim that "all specifically religious art is expressionistic" (Tillich [1955] 1989, p. 190; Thiessen 1993; Manning 2009;

Daelemans 2012). With this term, he did not express his preference for any artistic style, be it German expressionism or any other. Instead, at a safe distance from fruitless discussions around style, he rather spoke about "expressiveness", probably using the term expressionism in an ambiguous way. Hence, what makes art religious is its expressive character, which he described as "the principle of breaking through the beautified naturalistic surface of things to the real depths which break out with disruptive power" (Tillich [1955] 1989, p. 191). Hence, expressiveness speaks about a sudden direct, immediate contact between the viewer and the mystery (the "real depths") through the means of the material outlines of a specific artwork or building.

Another element to understanding his theological framework and this connection between art and religion is his method of correlation (Clayton 1980). This is a likewise controversial method in which, basically, an existential question is related to a theological answer (in recent times, theologians have proposed correctives to this method; see Depoorter 2006; Stoker and Grube 2020).

Furthermore, sacred emptiness and religious symbols relate to each other in the same way as what Tillich described as the "Protestant principle" and "Catholic substance". For him, the Protestant principle is "the acknowledgment of the majesty of the divine against every human claim. From this it follows that no church, and no self-expression of any church, is in itself absolute" (Tillich [1955] 1989, p. 188). This principle is symbolically expressed by sacred emptiness (Tillich [1962] 1989, p. 217).

On this basis, emptiness could be "filled with symbolic objects of all kinds". However, "Protestantism need not reject these elements of Catholic substance, but it should subject them to some definite criteria" (Tillich [1962] 1989, p. 217). In this sense, rather than "objects of veneration" with their tendency to idolatry and magic, Tillich pleads for symbolism in the form of "elements of architecture" that "heighten the religious impact of the church building" (Tillich [1962] 1989, p. 218). This is exactly what Kieckhefer pointed out in the quote above: Tillich's emphasis on preserving the absolute transcendence of the holy (Protestant principle) and the relativity of any religious symbol (of Catholic substance).

Finally, his diagnosis of the religiosity of his time is that many religious symbols simply "have died", have become meaningless and devoid of expressive power, as yet unable to "open up the soul" (Tillich [1952] 1989, p. 40), to break through the material limits to reach directly the personal core of the viewer. The emptiness that is needed in such a time should get rid of those symbols that are not religiously expressive anymore, albeit without falling into a mere emptiness that has lost its sacredness and its expressive power. In this sense, Tillich is highly critical with the "simple" emptiness caused by the iconoclast fury of early Reformation and which he calls "ugly", "painful", and "desperate" (Tillich [1962] 1989, p. 215).

Hence, emptiness is only sacred when it is not the sign of absence and privation, but when it is space "filled with the presence of that which cannot be expressed" (Tillich [1965] 1989, p. 227). The question is how, when, and where emptiness can be a religious symbol in its own right, an apophatic symbol of the sacred with therapeutic, soothing, and healing qualities.

A desire for minimalism in his time can be understood to get rid of the "abundant manifoldness" of dead or dying symbols. However, today, church architecture might have fallen into the other extreme, seemingly at odds with symbolism and iconography. It is probable that religious art, apart from some felicitous exceptions, is today still in crisis and has not yet found its proper way to address our contemporaries.

However, in 1957, Tillich argued prophetically that it was "quite probable that the renewal of religious art will start in cooperation with architecture" (Tillich [1957] 1989, p. 124). Considering the latest and smallest sacred buildings constructed in western Europe alone, I believe the times have proved him right. Indeed, in recent years, numerous smaller chapels have popped up as do mushrooms, as if the private chapel were the paradigmatic religious building of our postmodern age (the cathedral being the paradigm of the Middle Ages, the lavishly decorated parish church belonging to the Baroque, and the "living

room"-church having its home in the 1970s; see Panofsky 1957; Simson 1962; Debuyst 1968; Daelemans 2015b, pp. 72–85).

Famous architects, not always particularly religious, seem eager to design the smallest sacred spaces. To name only a few well-known examples in western Europe: Christian Kerez's *Oberrealta chapel* (1992) in Switzerland; Peter Zumthor's *Bruder Klaus chapel* (2007) in Mechernich, Germany; Bob van Reeth's *Pilgrim chapel* (2012) in Westvleteren, Belgium; Alejandro Beautell's *Ermita de San Juan Bautista* (2013) on the Canarian island of El Hierro, Spain; John Pawson's *Wooden Chapel* (2018) in Unterliezheim, Germany; and the chapels of the first Vatican Biennale pavilion in Venice in 2018.

In this sense, sacred emptiness seems the perfect answer to a time of *horror vacui*, in which every gap is filled with some meaningful symbol. Our times have a lot in common with former times of *horror vacui*. The need for silence and quietness has become acute (van Rooyen 2018). Therefore, it is important again to ask ourselves for the place of sacred emptiness in our lives.

In 1962, Tillich came to the following conclusion: "The sacred void can be a powerful symbol of the presence of the transcendent God. But this effect is possible only if the architecture shapes the empty space in such a way that the numinous character of the building is manifest. An empty room filled only with benches and a desk for the preacher is like a classroom for religious instruction, far removed from the spiritual function which a church building must have" (Tillich [1962] 1989, p. 217). Again, he contrasts sacred and mere emptiness, which does not have the power to express the "numinous", the presence of the divine.

Finally, near the end of his life, he described the desired effect of sacred emptiness upon us: "The experience of the presence of the holy by the kind of space the architect has created is what must be intended, even before anything else happens within this space. Since the experience of the holy is never directly possible, because it transcends everything finite, its presence must be mediated by authentic representation and symbolic expression. Which kind of expression is adequate, depends on the character of the relation of a religious group to ultimate reality" (Tillich [1965] 1989, p. 227).

Tillich speaks here of the established theological polarity between transcendence and immanence, the first of which could best be expressed by sacred emptiness (according to the Protestant principle) and the second by an abundance of symbols (according to Catholic substance). Again, the first "is not an emptiness by privation, but it is an emptiness by inspiration. It is not an emptiness where we feel empty, but it is an emptiness where we feel that the empty space is filled with the presence of that which cannot be expressed in any finite form" (Tillich [1965] 1989, p. 227). This corresponds with the polarity between honesty and consecration ((Dudley 1995); see an in-depth study of this polarity in (Daelemans 2015b, pp. 237–44)).

It is noteworthy that, at least according to this theologian, the spiritual and numinous dimension, which could also be named sacramental from a Roman Catholic point of view, is essential in contemporary Protestant architecture. Even though he does not say *how* architecture concretely could create this effect, his insistence on the fact that it is the architecture itself that "shapes the empty space" is noteworthy. In 1955, he acclaimed the specifically architectural play of space and light as "a mysticism from below", which neither needs to be "beautified" by aesthetic ornament nor "signified" by religious symbols because architectural emptiness is powerful enough as a religious symbol by itself (Tillich [1955] 1989, p. 192).

Let us now turn to Rudolf Schwarz, whose book *Vom Bau der Kirche* is quoted by Tillich in 1955, just before he deals with sacred emptiness (Tillich [1955] 1989, p. 192).

2.2. Schwarz's Understanding of Sacred Emptiness

Highly influenced by the theology of Romano Guardini, the Roman Catholic architect Rudolf Schwarz is most famous for his primer on church building, *Vom Bau der Kirche*, translated in 1958 into English as *The Church Incarnate* (Schwarz [1938] 1958; Zahner 2018;

Daelemans 2019). Here, he presents his view of architecture as essentially dynamic, as the "combination of life, space, and time", as he defines architecture in his first publication (Schwarz 1924, p. 274). Kieckhefer dedicated a whole chapter to this architect, his theory, and his practice, but, unlike my own reading, he considers his buildings more of a "contemplative" than of a "kinetic" kind (Kieckhefer 2004, pp. 229–64). Unfortunately, the literature on his figure and works still does not (in my view) sufficiently address his essentially dynamic and communitarian view of church buildings, which I would like to emphasize here.

Architecture is, according to Schwarz, life wrapped around a living body, life that allows a living body to move and to dance: "What then comes into being is first and foremost circumscribed space—shelter, living space, ceremonial space, a space which replaces the space of the world. We could almost say, and indeed it is true, that building is based on the inner spaciousness of the body, on the knowledge of its extent and the form of its growth, on the knowledge of its articulation and of its power to expand. Indeed, it is with the body that we experience building, with the outstretched arms and the pacing feet, with the roving glance and with the ear, and above all else in breathing. Space is dancingly experienced. However, the surroundings are the inversion of the dance: that space inside of which the dance extends itself, that space which stands ready for the body, is not, as is usually assumed, the outward radiating of the body but rather its inverted space—the body's space turned inside out and projected into the outer world. The body's space, however, forces itself outward whereas the space of the building forces itself inward so that its skin lies close to that of the dancing people. The inside of the structure overflows; the content of the space is larger than its skin" (Schwarz [1938] 1958, p. 27).

In this sense, Schwarz's thinking on church building starts with the body, the individual body and the collective body of a Eucharistic assembly called to become the Body of Christ (Schwarz [1938] 1958; Daelemans 2015b, pp. 278–99). The body needs empty space to dance. This dance is not in the first place to be taken literally but rather as a metaphor for the changing expression of the living body: the body adopts different postures over time. These postures, in a religious context, express diverse attitudes towards the divine.

Over time, architecture is as organic as a plant that grows out of the "space of a point" (*Punktraum*, the German word that Schwarz uses, expresses well that even the smallest dot is in itself primarily "space": (Schwarz 1924)). Architecture is space over time for a living body. Architecture is first and foremost "living space" (*Lebendiger Raum*) that grows and develops, giving way to a variety of "fundamental manifestations" (*Grundanschauungen*). These are akin to hinges or "oscillatory stations" (*Schwingungsstände*), each with a "definite direction" (*bestimmte Richtung*) towards a higher reality (Schwarz 1924).

This initial idea is further developed in Schwarz's grand vision of the "Cathedral of All Times", which is his dynamic vision of the diverse spatial configurations that a Eucharistic community adopts over time (Schwarz [1938] 1958; Daelemans 2019). In other words, it is the communitarian use of a church building over time, valid for "all (liturgical) times". Schwarz recognizes six basic *Grundanschauungen* or hinges that express fundamental expressions of the relationship with the divine. If it were not a "cathedral", that is, if the community were reduced to only one spatial configuration, without growing organically into another configuration, time would not have been taken into account, and architecture would be drained of its life and reduced to mere space.

These six configurations or archetypes are well known and need not be addressed here: the ring, the open ring, the chalice of light, the way, the dark chalice, and the dome of light. It would be wrong to consider them mere "plans" or "blueprints"—although it was in this limited way that his book was read and used, producing buildings as static containers around some of his fundamental archetypes (Struck 2018, p. 60). Similarly, Frédéric Debuyst considered his book "one of the most dangerous ever written" (Debuyst 1968, p. 45).

More important than these separate expressions of a different communitarian attitude towards the divine is the communitarian *use* of the empty space over time. For instance,

the ring is the natural configuration of a group of people around a meaningful center. Some church buildings have a centralized plan with the altar in the exact center (for instance, *Saint-François de Molitor*, as we will see). However, this ring breaks open during specific liturgical rites towards a meaningful symbol or an empty space in front of the altar (the open ring) or above (the chalice of light). Further on, people proceed as pilgrims in procession (the way) until they arrive at a dark point in life (the dark chalice), where precisely light is born again (the dome of light).

In this sense, we might understand Pope Francis's statement that "time is more important than space" (Francis 2013, p. 222). We have spaces in order to use them in complementary ways over time. Indeed, "only the cathedral is true body. The archetypes were like limbs of the hidden body of history; they contained the whole by implication but they themselves remained its phase. [. . .] A higher life is at hand, and it speaks from time to time in changing forms" (Schwarz [1938] 1958, p. 195). It is the same organic life, the same mystery, which speaks through different communitarian configurations (*Grundanschauungen*) of the same community.

Although Schwarz uses the expression "sacred emptiness" only once, the idea of emptiness is recurrent in his oeuvre and is always synonymous with the "resplendent abundance" of God's mystery (Schwarz [1938] 1958, p. 87). It is most of all in his discussion of the open ring that he speaks of emptiness with this symbolic density (Schwarz [1938] 1958, pp. 67–94). The open ring is, as its name states, a ring opened towards God, a ring that God has entered as mystery and as emptiness: "The hidden openness of the world's center has become visible. [. . .] Wherever the earthly form breaks off prematurely, God begins; it shows [. . .] that it was through God that the earth was wounded, and that it is the open place in the binding rings which is the sacred place; [. . .] that all things are made perfect in God, that in God all things are redeemed, that it is God who makes the earth whole. This archetype makes it clear that when emptiness breaks into a thing, God is near, for this invasion of emptiness is not meaningless annihilation: it is the beginning of growth into the light" (Schwarz [1938] 1958, pp. 74–77). Again, very similar to what Tillich said, emptiness is not mere absence but presence, not privation but inspiration.

The empty space in the open ring "is also Christ's empty seat at the table of this world. The death of the Lord and his going forth are the wound where history bleeds. When the Lord departed, he left the world open behind him" (Schwarz [1938] 1958, p. 78). Sacred emptiness expresses at the same time vulnerability and presence, expectation and promise, human limitation and divine fulfillment. The open ring, in which the gathered community allows emptiness to be meaningfully included as a theological symbol in their liturgical gathering and in their liturgical space, expresses well Schwarz's favorite image of the human being as open hand, open eye, chalice, and answer to God's initiative and call.

It is noteworthy that in what often in the literature still wrongly is referred to as a "plan" (as if it were the blueprint of a building and not the scheme of a momentary hinge of a living body adopting diverse postures), the open ring is a spatial configuration of a community, in which each member of the assembly is sketched as a small open chalice oriented towards the sacred emptiness that stands as the expression of the divine mystery. Even the presider is oriented towards the emptiness. This is the famous liturgical direction of *versus orientem*, for Schwarz writes before the liturgical changes of the Second Vatican Council, most plastically expressed in the space by the celebration *versus populum* (which would close the ring, if the presider fills the emptiness which is so meaningfully left open in the *open ring*-configuration). Due to his fondness for this plan, it comes as no surprise that Schwarz chose the open ring for the cover of his book.

In this sense, Guardini defended the powerful, gripping emptiness of Schwarz's *Corpus Christi* church (*Fronleichnam*, 1930) in Aachen: "This church is the home of the Holy Presence. To people who see only an empty interior, I reply that they should examine their feelings more deeply. Actually we frequently fail to recognize the serene calm of large uninterrupted planes, the clear expanse of an uncluttered chamber, the pure essential being of simple forms. We tend to call this 'emptiness'. We prefer to be surrounded by various

forms, objects, pictures—just as we prefer sound to silence. Have we forgotten that silence and words go together, just as inhaling and exhaling? That reverent silence is the deepest prayer before God, and that voiced prayer is impossible without silence? The same is true of a vast surface that is neither articulated nor filled with pictures and ornaments. This is not emptiness, this is silence—and in the silence is God; and from the stillness of these walls an inkling of God's presence may flower" (Guardini 1931; Schwarz [1960] 1969, p. 21).

Indeed, the altar is the Christocentric threshold between the space of the Spirit and the emptiness, which well "represents heaven" or the invisible space of the Father (Schwarz [1938] 1958, pp. 81–94; 1960, p. 29). For Schwarz, "heaven" should be found where the six archetypes remain "unfinished and open" (Schwarz [1938] 1958, p. 190). Schwarz is ever interested in the way that a Eucharistic community inhabits the space, for this way is expression and symbol in itself: "Thus the simple standing of the people in the open ring is itself the intimation, for it was the Lord himself who, at the very beginning, taught them to stand in this way. When the people follow him, they sit with him at table. This form is not the final one, but it precedes the final form as question precedes answer. If this form of the world is still empty, then its emptiness says that God is rich abundance, when it is dark, it makes manifest Gods sacred light, when it is open, it awaits God as its consummation and completion. Is not the Church, when she so stands, like one of the early sculptured figures who stand in prayer with upraised arms, embracing a space—the space of their heads and hearts—and at the same time uttering the heartfelt plea that God may come? And is not the whole of humankind standing like this before the Lord in the earthly interim?" (Schwarz [1938] 1958, p. 90).

Hence, emptiness seems, in Schwarz's view, and already succinctly pointed out by Kieckhefer, mostly experienced as sacred in communitarian enactment of the space, in communitarian interaction with the space, adopting different postures during a Eucharistic celebration or a liturgical year, allowing emptiness to become a religious symbol of expectation, promise, presence, and fulfillment. In other words, emptiness needs a worshiping community to be experienced in its fullest sense, for the inherent sacredness to come to the fore. In this sense, Schwarz goes further than Tillich, and both approaches enrich each other. Let us now turn to recent examples of sacred architecture to discover whether their ideas are still fruitful for the way we understand, use, and maintain emptiness in our church buildings today.

3. Discussion: Sacred Emptiness in Contemporary Church Architecture

Based on these rather theoretical findings, let us discuss the actuality of this plea for sacred emptiness in contemporary religious architecture. We will look at recent work by, among others, British architect John Pawson, French architect Jean-Marie Duthilleul, and Swiss architect Peter Zumthor. We will discover three mystagogical layers or dimensions in the experience and appropriation of sacred emptiness, from the most anonymous and universal level to the more engaging level of participation in the mystery.

3.1. Pawson's Churches

Concerning sacred emptiness, possibly what comes to mind is the extraordinarily attractive eeriness of John Pawson's churches, especially of the abbey of Novy Dvur in Czechia (1999–2004) and of his adroit retuning of the Benedictine archabbey church of Pannonhalma in Hungary (2006–2012) and of the *Sankt Moritzkirche* in Augsburg (2008–2013). The white empty spaces chant in silence. Their vastness invites one to quieten and to walk (because space is experienced by the living body) or to sit contemplatively. There is strength and solidity in the architectural volumes and in the way they create space around likewise solid, austere, and compact liturgical furniture as an altar, an ambo, and dark stalls and pews.

Most of all, the emptiness (which is surprisingly sacred in an obvious, nearly palpable, and, as it were, quasi-primitive way) creates a strangely dense atmosphere of dialogue and resonance around one well-chosen small, sculptural, and devotional object: the polychrome

statue of the Virgin in Novy Dvur, the white liturgical furniture (baptistery, ambo, altar) in Pannonhalma, and the 1632 Baroque statue of the Savior made by Georg Petel in *Sankt Moritz*. In the latter case, the polychrome carving lay neglected for years before receiving prominent attention in Pawson's powerful staging (Morris 2019).

What he did was essentially to provide sacred emptiness around this statue, releasing as it were its everlasting power, demonstrating that antique objects still have somehow, surprisingly, and miraculously, the power to move people in the 21st century, because the *truth* they sing is eternal. Indeed, all art is contemporary, which means that when we are in line with a work of art, however ancient, its truth comes forth to us (Gadamer [1977] 1986). In this sense, "a work of art is beautiful when its inner essence and significance find perfect expression of its existence. [. . .] Beauty is the full, clear, and inevitable expression of the inner truth in the external manifestation. [. . .] In order that beauty may be made manifest, something must exist which will reveal itself externally; there must be an essential truth which compels utterance. [. . .] Truth does not mean mere lifeless accuracy of comprehension, but the right and appropriate regulation of life, a vital spiritual essence; it means the intrinsic value of existence in all its force and fullness. And beauty is the triumphant splendor which breaks forth when the hidden truth is revealed" (Guardini [1918] 1998, pp. 76–77).

In Pannonhalma, Pawson created a unified church space that "contributes both functionally and visually to the main function, the creation of a space serving deep prayer and meditation for the community" (Vukoszávlyev 2017, p. 328). The space was emptied; stained glass windows were removed and replaced by thin onyx plates, creating a unified atmosphere of diffuse light propitious for contemplation. This had a surprising effect: "The longitudinal space organization of the nave was to be made even more powerful, with which the path leads from the entry in the western gate to the light flowing through the window of the eastern end wall" (Vukoszávlyev 2017, p. 328). In some way, this corresponds to Schwarz's way-configuration. Freeing space was indeed, as Tillich had stated, a necessary preliminary to discovering new symbols or encountering old ones anew. Sacred emptiness and expert staging are sometimes the only things that old religious symbols need to release their everlasting expressive power, the only things we need to understand them anew.

In this sense, along this longitudinal "way", a new liturgical center was created, according to the now classic concept of *Communio-Raum* (Gerhards et al. 2003): "The immaterial substance is supplemented by physically palpable objects. The functional elements of the liturgy are symbols—thus, they naturally go beyond themselves. The baptismal font symbolizes the entry to the community, the lectern is a symbol of the preached word, and the events at the altar symbolize the presence of Christ embodied by the Eucharist" (Vukoszávlyev 2017, p. 334).

We might be able to recognize at least three stages of entering the atmosphere of sacred emptiness created in these three spaces, two of them being monastic, which has a non-negligible influence on the way the spaces are experienced and inhabited. The deeper one enters the space; the deeper one enters the divine mystery that is made present here. These three stages are part of a mystagogical process of being introduced into the mystery.

First, one may enter this space individually, being attentive to the atmosphere with all the senses (synaesthetically). Due to the pure, diffuse, and white light, the emptiness that literally reigns in these spaces has an obvious sacred character in itself. The light in the three churches has a whiteness and a strangeness that disturbs the mind, provoking the question of where the light comes from, if its source is natural or artificial. This effect of surprise, contrast, and strangeness creates the right "heterotopia" for this kind of sacred building. This is the term used by French philosopher Michel Foucault to argue for "a kind of effectively enacted utopia" in which ordinary places are inverted, complemented, and contested (Foucault [1984] 1986, p. 27).

Pawson's thorough minimalism in his play of light, treatment of materials, and staging of the architectural volumes are a way to say more, "something bigger, less quantifi-

able and less definable" than the religious in the ordinary sense, "something that means that we don't need to see the altar and the tabernacle to know we are in a sacred place" (Morris 2010, p. 74). At this level, the sacredness is still anonymous and universal, more akin to an inkling of transcendence than a clear message about the precise nature of the divine. We are reminded of Tillich's suggestion that the numinous character of sacred emptiness is a powerful symbol of the presence of the divine. Furthermore, to experience this synaesthetic space has a healing character (Daelemans 2020).

Second, for the visitor who wishes to proceed further into the mystery, the sculptural object provides this still anonymous mystery with a clear Name and a Face. A dialogue starts between what Tillich called the Protestant principle (sacred emptiness) and Catholic substance (religious symbol). This visitor delves deeper into the categorical content of the transcendental, in Karl Rahner's famous terminology (Rahner 1969). In both Novy Dvur and Augsburg, the statues paint the mystery (or the sacredness of the emptiness) with the colors of the Roman Catholic faith. However, this stage is still not the end of the mystagogical journey.

Third, in line with Schwarz's intuitions, when the member of a liturgical community starts to interact with its liturgical furniture and "enacts" the space as it were, something new "happens" to the sacred emptiness. It becomes meaningfully filled with music, with chant, with rites, with readings that are proclaimed, with blessings that are proffered, with prayers that are pronounced in the hope they are heard by the invisible God. On this third level of sacred emptiness, the users and dwellers of the place are involved and incorporated into the mystery. As French philosopher Jean-Luc Marion states: "The Name—it has to be dwelt in without saying it; but by letting it say, name, and call us" (Marion 2002, p. 162).

In the case of Novy Dvur, this comes perhaps best to the fore at the end of each day, when the monks sing the Salve Regina in the darkening church, in which only the tiny statue of Our Lady of Novy Dvur is lit: she becomes an impressively colorful source of warm light surrounded by a dense atmosphere of chant and silence. The latest, coldest daylight still creeps in through the eerie wall openings until it is totally dark and quiet. This emptiness is not merely empty; it is not desperate absence; it is apophatically filled with mystery and presence (Daelemans 2015b, pp. 317–19, figs. 6.1 and 6.2).

In the light of this example, Kieckhefer seems right when he suggests that "it is perhaps no coincidence that many of the most successful modern churches are those of monastic and other nonparochial religious communities: not only are the planners free of pressure from parish members but, more important, they can cultivate a symbolic minimalism with assurance that those in the community will bring a richness of associations to the liturgy independent of the liturgical environment" (Kieckhefer 2004, p. 273).

In the case of Novy Dvur, it might be noted that the Cistercian tradition has always preferred minimalism, as is well known. Monastic communities inhabit well their sacred spaces as the beating heart of their very existence, where they find daily nutrition for their faith, both individually and collectively. In the case of a parish church, where this nutrition is limited to Sunday service, and not the steady ritual of the liturgy of hours, minimalism is more demanding.

Hence, the mystery sacramentally expressed and made present by the sacred emptiness is at first anonymous but synaesthetically palpable by all the senses at once. Through interaction with meaningful symbols, the mystery receives a definite Name and even a clear Face: the echo of a sacred name resonates in the silent emptiness. Finally, thanks to the liturgical actions of a community, the sacred emptiness becomes signified as the Eucharistic space of resonance for the worshiping Body of Christ (Daelemans 2015a, 2015b).

3.2. Saint-François de Molitor, Paris

This is exactly what happens in the parish church of *Saint-François de Molitor* in Paris, designed by local architects Corinne Callies and Jean-Marie Duthilleul (2000–2005). Here, the sacredness of the emptiness (on the first, still anonymous and a transcendental level of the mystery) has also in the first place to do with the ingenious but simple play of

light. After leaving behind a rather busy street and passing through a darker narthex with a low ceiling, one is struck by the bright, quiet, and open atmosphere of the main worshiping space.

One steps into a welcoming space that opens in the back to a garden. The whole back façade is a window that is treated in such a way that it becomes translucent towards the top, providing a useful shield against impertinent peeks from the neighboring apartment blocks and at the same time creating cloudy light, which works perfectly as a symbol for the mystery. As such, this window serves as a contemporary reredos, providing a pertinent peek into the afterworld, which has a lot of light and resembles a garden. The garden itself, however, can be seen but not entered: it becomes an appropriate eschatological symbol for the already but not yet. The emptiness is welcoming and, in Tillich's words, a powerful symbol of God's transcendence. It even allows one to discover a new religious symbol: the garden. As such, in Tillich's words, it is the preliminary sacred emptiness for something new to develop.

This might all still be too abstract and interpretative were it not that the worshiping assembly, during the penitential rites, orients herself to this garden and this window in front of which is placed a gilded cross of glory. In this impressive liturgical enactment of the space, the sacred emptiness becomes inhabited and signified by the communitarian and corporal conversion towards the cross, towards the light, and towards the garden, all symbols and reminders of the mystery with a definite Name and Face.

In short, the emptiness of this church is sacred at an anonymous level due to the diffuse light, which at first comes as a pleasant surprise after the dark narthex, and which tickles the mind because initially it is not clear where it comes from and how it is made to look and to feel as a cloud (an expression of Tillich's Protestant principle and preliminary sacred emptiness). On a second level, delving deeper into the mystery, one discovers that what at first seems anonymous has a clear Name and Face: the gilded cross that stands prominently in the space is the hermeneutic key that helps to interpret the light and the garden in Christological terms (in Tillich's terms, sacred emptiness allows for old symbols to be seen anew and for new symbols to emerge). Finally, due to the meaningful interaction of a worshiping community with the space (in line with Schwarz's musings), the sacredness of the emptiness becomes even more filled with meaning, in this case with expectation and, due to the penitential rites, to the humble petition for forgiveness and mercy, together with the glory given to God.

Somehow, probably without being aware of it, the community adopts here Schwarz's open ring-configuration in which they allow the rich concept of sacred emptiness to enter their space and wound them to their core. However, they do not remain fossilized in this spatial configuration, which is only a hinge and a moment of the liturgical celebration: it evolves organically into other configurations, such as a ring around the altar during the Eucharistic prayer. This contemporary example does not only demonstrate the fruitfulness of Schwarz's theory for the use of liturgical spaces today but also how he goes beyond Tillich in his understanding of sacred emptiness (see a more detailed discussion of this case study in Daelemans 2015b, pp. 266–75).

3.3. Bruder Klaus Field Chapel, Mechernich

Another case study could be Peter Zumthor's acclaimed *Bruder Klaus* field chapel (2007) in Mechernich. In contrast to the former examples, including Zumthor's famous wooden *Sogn Benedetg* chapel (1988) in Sumvitg, this small chapel is not meant for communitarian gatherings, much in the same way as Pawson's *Wooden Chapel* (2018) near Unterliezheim. These chapels are meant for individual visitors, creating a special atmosphere of sacred emptiness, which is propitious for a shorter or longer moment of quiet meditation and contemplative rest, for discovering sacred emptiness as a religious symbol in its own right, perhaps the most meaningful and needed of our times. Hence, they do not contain liturgical furniture as an altar, a tabernacle, or an ambo: they are mere places "set aside", according to the oldest meaning of the sacred as separated from profane and ordinary space

(Eliade 1961). These heterotopias are made meaningful by their different character, by their character of difference.

What makes the emptiness sacred in such places? Usually, the (universal and anonymous) sacredness is caused by a special staging thanks to the individual genius of the architect. Essential are contrast and surprise in the use of the materials, the shape of the spaces, and the relationship between light and shadows. In Zumthor's case, he produced an extraordinary effect of surprise by contrasting the rational, rectangular exterior in concrete with the sheltering, organic, dark, earthy, curved, and cave-like interior. Natural light, fresh air, and even rain fall in through a skylight in the shape of a raindrop. A small wooden bench invites for a moment of rest, if only to adapt one's eyes to the dark atmosphere and the eerie, grainy surroundings.

A small bust of Nikolaus von Flüe, to which the chapel is dedicated, and a symbol of the Trinity are the only elements that provide the anonymous sacredness with a Name and a Face. However, they are not in the first place the ones that make this emptiness sacred. The sacredness has to do with the way that nature is as it were "abstracted" and condensed within this chapel, in which nothing reminds the visitor of a chapel, but where its spirituality and religiosity remind one more of archetypes as a grotto, a tent, a womb, and a shed (Goldberger 2010, p. 228). It is a shelter where nature reigns and where one becomes aware with all the senses of temperature, the skin of the building, the humidity of the air, and the quietness of silence. Finally, one is invited to light a small candle perhaps as an age-old gesture to express prayer in any of its forms. The sweet scent of the beeswax contributes to the powerfully haptic atmosphere (Pallasmaa 1996).

Its sacred emptiness is difficult to name, but this place is neither merely nor desperately empty, in Tillich's words: the many entries in the guestbook reveal this, grappling to come to terms with the powerful, fascinating, and primitive atmosphere of this place, praising the genius of the place, of the starchitect, and of architecture. For a Christian visitor, all these might be just ways in which God prefers to be anonymous. Nonetheless, at no point is one obliged to give this anonymous mystery a definite, categorical Name and Face.

Rather than a chapel in the traditional meaning of the term, this building provides the visitor with an experience. Rather than an object, it is an event in which one must enter, following the curves of the walls and being guided deeper into the experience by the light. Indeed, it is with the body that one experiences space and enters a mystery.

3.4. Protestant Buildings

As we have started with Tillich, it might be enriching to consider some recent Protestant buildings where sacred emptiness can be encountered today. Tillich argued that architectural emptiness is powerful enough as a religious symbol by itself (Tillich [1955] 1989, p. 192). The famous *Kamppi Chapel* (2012) in Helsinki, by Kimmo Lintula, Niko Sirola, and Mikko Summanen, displays emptiness with profusion, encapsulating the visitors, silence, and diffuse light in pleasant wood, as if awaiting a numinous Presence to appear. It is there as a presence, a question, an invitation, and a suggestion: to enter, to experience, to wait. For a Word to be heard, for resonance in the heart. The building excels in expressing this atmosphere of preparation, in staging this preliminary reality to an event to occur. It is a pure architectural expression of what Tillich called the Protestant principle.

Likewise, the *Lumen church* (2008) in London, an impressive retuning by Theis and Kahn of a 1966 Courtenay Theobald church, displays a "Ray of Light", an empty white cone as a symbol of divine transcendence that separates the actual worship space from the gathering space (Daelemans 2015b, p. 85, fig. 1.10).

In Berlin, at the site where once an infamous Wall divided East from West, the Evangelical community courageously reinvented reconciliation with their *Chapel of the Reconciliation* (2000) by Rudolf Reitermann and Peter Sassenroth. The emptiness is meaningfully inhabited by a mutilated reredos of the former, destroyed church. In the walls, small fragments of the former church can be seen as precious stones, for reconciliation can only rise as a phoenix out of ashes. Some new symbols (and old ones made new, such as the reredos),

such as the crucifix and the new altar placed on top of the mensa of the old altar, turn this empty space into a place and exercise of remembrance and hope.

The *Auferstehungskirche* (Claus and Forster 2008) in Wolznach displays a surprisingly fascinating, contemporary choreography of indirect light, color, and a cut-out cross to express the sacredness and transcendence of the emptiness. Moreover, a biblical verse on the orange dyed wall reveals that this emptiness is not empty, but full of hope: " . . . und Er wird abwischen alle Tränen von ihren Augen, und der Tod wird nicht mehr sein . . . " (. . . and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more . . . Rev 21:4). This subtle subtitle contributes to the "nearly Baroque-like staging", as the architects themselves claim, in reference to the nearby Roman Catholic church (Daelemans 2015b, p. 356).

Finally, highly significant, bringing to mind Schwarz's approach to sacred emptiness, is considering how the Episcopalian parishioners of *Saint Gregory of Nyssa* (Goldman 1995) in San Francisco inhabit the emptiness around their wooden altar-table: on Sundays, they gather here to sing and celebrate the Eucharist, dancing on the rhythm of the impressive *Dancing Saints* fresco by local artist Mark Dukes. On Fridays, they organize here a food pantry for the less fortunate, demonstrating that the sacredness of the emptiness in the first place resides in solidarity and service (Daelemans 2015b, pp. 255–66).

4. Conclusions: The Practical Mystagogy of Sacred Emptiness

In a time when the blunt, minimalist emptiness of many contemporary church buildings rightly encounters criticism for its incapacity to create a sacred atmosphere (Barron 2001; Doorly 2007), it is good not to reject emptiness, minimalism, and modernism as such but to ask again for what precisely makes emptiness sacred. Instead of providing practical solutions, which are left for further investigations, the aims of this article were to put the plea for sacred emptiness again to the fore, to show its roots in the twentieth century, and, most of all, to distinguish it from mere emptiness as a religious symbol in its own right.

Sacred emptiness is a rich and complex term. It is only empty from an exterior, visual point of view. It is distinguished from mere emptiness because it is filled or inhabited by sacredness, which becomes palpable for who enters the space (and the mystery present in the space). Being filled, it is emptiness, nevertheless. However, this is emptiness as creative potential, pregnant with unexpected possibilities, waiting for living bodies to interact with the space and thus reveal its hidden potential.

In the contemporary examples of sacred architecture, we have encountered sacred emptiness as it was argued for both by Tillich and Schwarz in the twentieth century. We have come to recognize three levels or dimensions in the sacredness of this emptiness. The first level is still anonymous and without a face. In all the aforementioned cases, it has to do with how light is put into play with always the surprising effect of its staging and the thought-provoking question for its source. Light seems a propitious carrier for the mystery. The spaces provide room for light to be.

This synaesthetic dimension of sacred emptiness has nothing to do with the religious symbols and items (icons, images, crosses, altars, and so on). Most practically, surprise and contrast seem to be two valuable companions for architects to enhance the sacredness of their empty spaces. They must be heterotopias in their fullest sense, inverting and complementing ordinary places of any kind. If they are similar to a classroom full of benches, they are merely empty without any inkling of the sacred.

On the second level, sacred emptiness is the expansive space of resonance or halo for a particularly meaningful object or symbol, which lends the sacredness a definite Name and Face. Who is open to these more definite meanings enters the mystery more fully and proceeds further in the mystagogical experience.

On the third level, a worshiping community interacts with the space and its elements in such a way that the sacred emptiness becomes filled with new meaning, often unexpected for one who only looks at the place from outside, as it were an empty object and not an

instrument to be played by a liturgical community. In this sense, because they did not attend the liturgical celebrations, scholars have misunderstood *Saint François de Molitor* as a mere inward-looking, "christomonist", and closed ring-configuration, according to Schwarz's archetypes (Magnani and Valdinoci 2007, p. 55). In other words, these scholars failed to experience the space in its fullest Trinitarian and Eucharistic extent as a surprisingly dynamic, organic, and flexible sacred space, able to adopt different spatial configurations as suggested by Schwarz, and thus coming very close to his grand vision of *The Cathedral of All Times* (Daelemans 2015b, pp. 266–75).

In short, sacred emptiness applied to architecture is a *relational* concept, implicating both the visitor or dweller and the spatial surroundings. Moreover, the concept of sacred emptiness is *paradoxical* because it combines presence with expectation, emptiness with fullness, and silence with meaning. Meaningful symbols and rites need room, sacred emptiness, to resonate and unfold. Visitors and dwellers need sacred emptiness to come to terms with the transcendence and the mystery of life.

The plea for sacred emptiness became acute in the early twentieth century, in a time when a Baroque *horror vacui* and individual religious symbols themselves lost their meaning and appeal. Today, sacred emptiness is still a religious symbol that is again theologically essential, not only to remind our contemporaries of the transcendental dimension of life, but to provide a space for celebrating and dealing with the existential questions of life.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

Barrie, Thomas. 2010. *The Sacred In-Between: The Mediating Roles of Architecture*. New York: Routledge.
Barron, Robert. 2001. Beyond Beige Churches: Modernity and Liturgical Architecture. *Antiphon* 6/3: 14–22.
Brenneman, Robert, and Brian J. Miller. 2016. When Bricks Matter: Four Arguments for the Sociological Study of Religious Buildings. *Sociology of Religion* 77: 82–101. [CrossRef]
Brown, David. 2004. *God and Enchantment of Place: Reclaiming Human Experience*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Cavarra Britton, Karla. 2010. *Constructing the Ineffable: Contemporary Sacred Architecture*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Clayton, John Powell. 1980. *The Concept of Correlation: Paul Tillich and the Possibility of a Mediating Theology*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
Daelemans, Bert. 2012. Tillich and the Spilled Coffee Cup: The Breakthrough of the Spirit in Contemporary Church Architecture. *Bulletin of the North American Paul Tillich Society* 38: 35–53.
Daelemans, Bert. 2015a. Fifty Shades of Grey? Contemporary Churches as Lived Liturgies that Mediate Mysteries. In *Approaching the Threshold of Mystery: Liturgical Worlds and Theological Spaces*. Edited by Joris Geldhof, Daniel Minch and Trevor Maine. Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, pp. 25–43.
Daelemans, Bert. 2015b. *Spiritus Loci: A Theological Method for Contemporary Church Architecture*. Leiden and Boston: Brill.
Daelemans, Bert. 2019. Revisiter Rothenfels avec Guardini et Schwarz: Relecture théologique d'un espace mystagogique. In *L'espace Liturgique, un Espace D'Initiation*. Edited by Gilles Drouin. Paris: Cerf, pp. 137–78.
Daelemans, Bert. 2020. Healing Space: The Synaesthetic Quality of Church Architecture. *Religions* 11: 635. [CrossRef]
Debuyst, Frédéric. 1968. *Modern Architecture and Christian Celebration*. London: Lutterworth.
Depoorter, Annekatrien. 2006. Naar een Integere Theologie van de Ervaring: Theologische Herijking van de Moderne Correlatiemethodes van Paul Tillich en Edward Schillebeeckx. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, KU Leuven, Leuven, Belgium.
Doorly, Moyra. 2007. *No Place for God: The Denial of the Transcendent in Modern Church Architecture*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press.
Dudley, Martin. 1995. Honesty and Consecration: Paul Tillich's Criteria for a Religious Architecture. In *The Church and the Arts*, 2nd ed. Edited by Diana Wood. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 515–22.
Eliade, Mircea. 1961. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. New York: Harper & Row.
Foucault, Michel. 1986. Of Other Spaces. *Diacritics* 16: 22–27. First published 1984. [CrossRef]
Francis, Pope. 2013. Apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (November 24). Available online: http://bit.y/2ONeLXH (accessed on 10 July 2019).
French, Aaron. 2022. Sites of Re-Enchantment: Sacred Space and Nature in Early 20th Century Europe. *Religions* 13: 110. [CrossRef]

Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 1986. *The Relevance of the Beautiful*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. First published 1977.
Gerhards, Albert, Thomas Sternberg, and Walter Zahner. 2003. *Communio-Räume. Auf der Suche nach der Angemessenen Raumgestalt Katholischer Liturgie*. Regensburg: Schnell+Steiner.
Goldberger, Paul. 2010. Epilogue: On the Relevance of Sacred Architecture Today. In *Constructing the Ineffable: Contemporary Sacred Architecture*. Edited by Karla Cavarra Britton. New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 222–31.
Guardini, Romano. 1998. *The Spirit of the Liturgy*. New York: Herder. First published 1918.
Guardini, Romano. 1931. Die neuerbaute Fronleichnamskirche in Aachen. *Schildgenossen* 11: 267.
Hammond, Peter. 1961. *Liturgy and Architecture*. New York: Columbia University Press.
Kieckhefer, Richard. 2004. *Theology in Stone. Church Architecture from Byzantium to Berkeley*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Magnani, Franco, and Massimiliano Valdinoci. 2007. Nuove realizzazioni: Esempi internazionali. Analisi liturgica e architettonica. In *Spazio Liturgico e Orientamento. Atti del IV Convegno Liturgico Internazionale, Bose, 1–3 Giugno 2006*. Edited by Goffredo Boselli. Magnano: Qiqajon, pp. 37–60.
Manning, Russell Re. 2009. Tillich's Theology of Art. In *The Cambridge Companion to Paul Tillich*. Edited by Russell Re Manning. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 152–72.
Marion, Jean-Luc. 2002. *In Excess: Studies of Saturated Phenomena*. New York: Fordham University Press.
Morris, Alison. 2010. *John Pawson: Plain Space*. London and New York: Phaidon.
Morris, Alison. 2019. *John Pawson: Anatomy of Minimum*. London and New York: Phaidon.
Pallasmaa, Juhani. 1996. *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses*. London: Academy Editions.
Panofsky, Erwin. 1957. *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*. New York: Meridian Books.
Rahner, Karl. 1969. Offenbarung. In *Sacramentum Mundi*. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, vol. III, pp. 832–43.
Reymond, Bernard. 1995. Le Paradoxe de l'architecture religieuse: Remarques en marge de Paul Tillich. *Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie* 127: 143–53.
Reymond, Bernard. 2001. D'un temps à l'autre, d'un style d'architecture religieuse à l'autre. *Science et Esprit* 53: 293–307.
Reymond, Bernard. 2004. L'architecture entre "substance catholique" et "principe protestant". In *En Chemin Avec Paul Tillich*. Edited by André Gounelle and Bernard Reymond. Münster: LIT Verlag, pp. 205–10.
Schwarz, Rudolf. 1958. *The Church Incarnate: The Sacred Function of Christian Architecture*. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, Original 1938.
Schwarz, Rudolf. 1924. Über Baukunst. *Die Schildgenossen* 4: 273–84.
Schwarz, Rudolf. 1960. *Kirchenbau: Welt vor der Schwelle*. Heidelberg: F. H. Kerle Verlag.
Schwarz, Rudolf. 1969. The Eucharistic Building. *Faith and Form* 2: 20–23. First published 1960.
Simson, Otto von. 1962. *The Gothic Cathedral: Origins of Gothic Architecture and the Medieval Concept of Order*. New York: Pantheon Books.
Stoker, Wessel, and Dirk-Martin Grube. 2020. Tillich's Method of Correlation: Wessel Stoker in Discussion with Dirk-Martin Grube. *NTT: Journal for Theology and the Study of Religion* 74: 167–80. [CrossRef]
Struck, Martin. 2018. Architettura, arte, liturgia. Il tema della modernità nell'architettura sacra prima e dopo la guerra/Archiktektur, Kunst und Liturgie. Das Thema der Moderne in der Sakralarchitektur vor und nach dem Krieg. In *Arte Architettura Liturgia/Kunst Architektur Liturgie*. Edited by Katherin Bollenbeck, Giorgio Della Longa and Antonio Marchesi. Trento: Effe e Erre Edizioni, vol. 7, pp. 55–78.
Thiessen, Gesa Elsbeth. 1993. Religious Art is Expressionistic: A Critical Appreciation of Paul Tillich's Theology of Art. *Irish Theological Quarterly* 59: 301–11. [CrossRef]
Tillich, Paul. 1989. Art and Society. In *On Art and Architecture*. Edited by Dillenberger John and Jane Dillenberger. New York: Crossroad, pp. 11–41. First published 1952.
Tillich, Paul. 1989. Theology and Architecture. In *On Art and Architecture*. Edited by Dillenberger John and Jane Dillenberger. New York: Crossroad, pp. 188–98. First published 1955.
Tillich, Paul. 1989. Protestantism and Artistic Style. In *On Art and Architecture*. Edited by Dillenberger John and Jane Dillenberger. New York: Crossroad, pp. 119–25. First published 1957.
Tillich, Paul. 1989. Contemporary Protestant Architecture. In *On Art and Architecture*. Edited by Dillenberger John and Jane Dillenberger. New York: Crossroad, pp. 214–20. First published 1962.
Tillich, Paul. 1989. Honesty and Consecration in Art and Architecture. In *On Art and Architecture*. Edited by Dillenberger John and Jane Dillenberger. New York: Crossroad, pp. 221–28. First published 1965.
van Rooyen, Johan. 2018. Transcendence, Immanence and Religious Experience in a Post-Transcendence Era. *Verbum et Ecclesia* 39: 1–8. [CrossRef]
Vukoszávlyev, Zoltan. 2017. Redefining the Sacred Center. Two Case Studies on Recomposing Liturgical Spaces in Ancient Architectural Enterior [sic]. In *Patrimonio Architettonico Religioso. Nuove Funzioni e Processi di Trasformazione*. Edited by Carla Bartolozzi. Roma: Gangemi Editore, pp. 325–36.
Zahner, Walter. 1998. *Rudolf Schwarz—Baumeister der Neuen Gemeinde. Ein Beitrag zum Gespräch Zwischen Liturgietheologie und Architektur in der Liturgischen Bewegung*. Altenberge: Oros Verlag.
Zahner, Walter. 2018. Romano Guardini und Rudolf Schwarz/Rothenfels zwischen Mithos und Wirklichkeit. In *Arte Architettura Liturgia/Kunst Architektur Liturgie*. Edited by Katherin Bollenbeck, Giorgio Della Longa and Antonio Marchesi. Trento: Effe e Erre Edizioni, vol. 7, pp. 79–99.