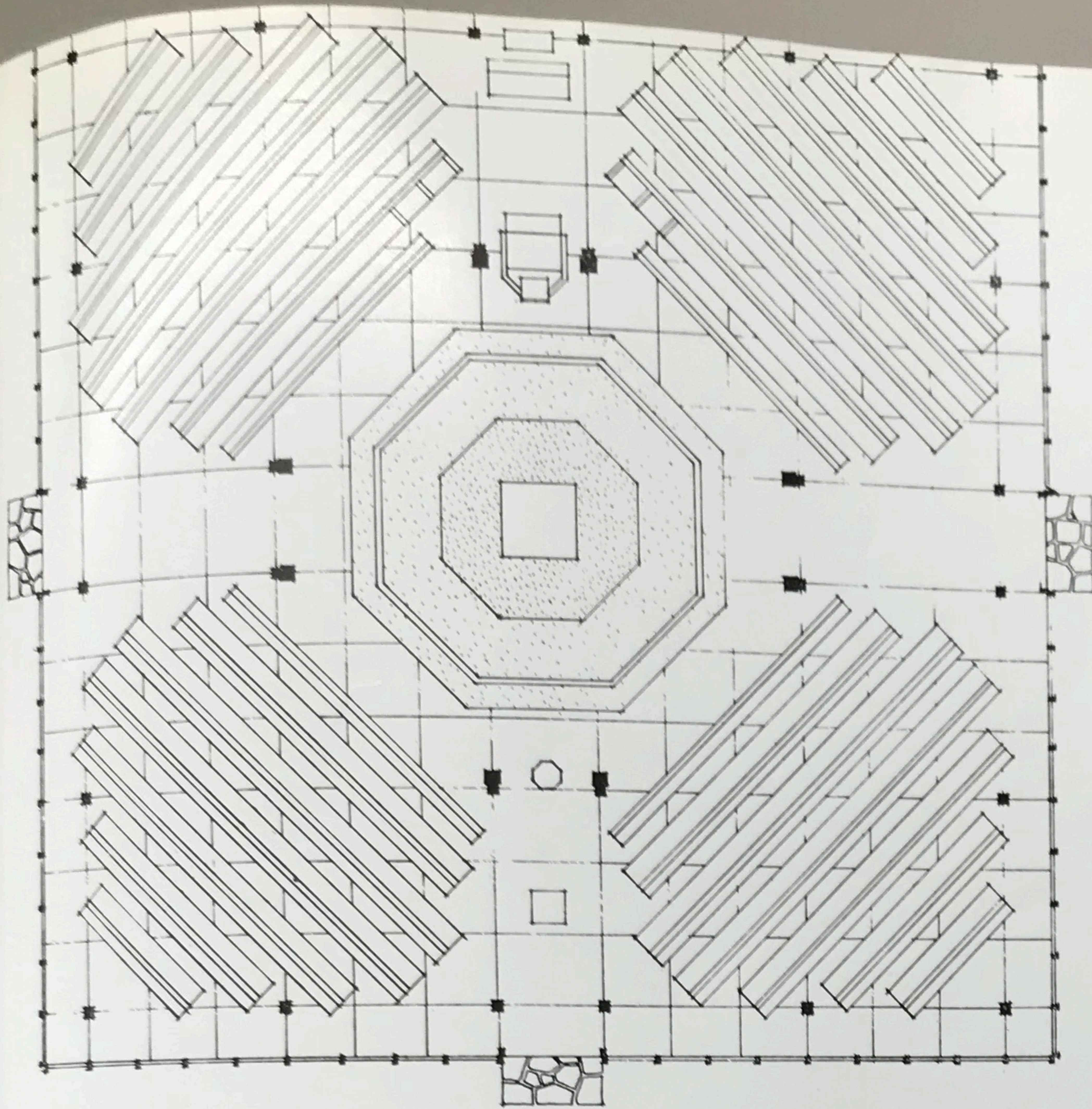




PLACES OF WORSHIP



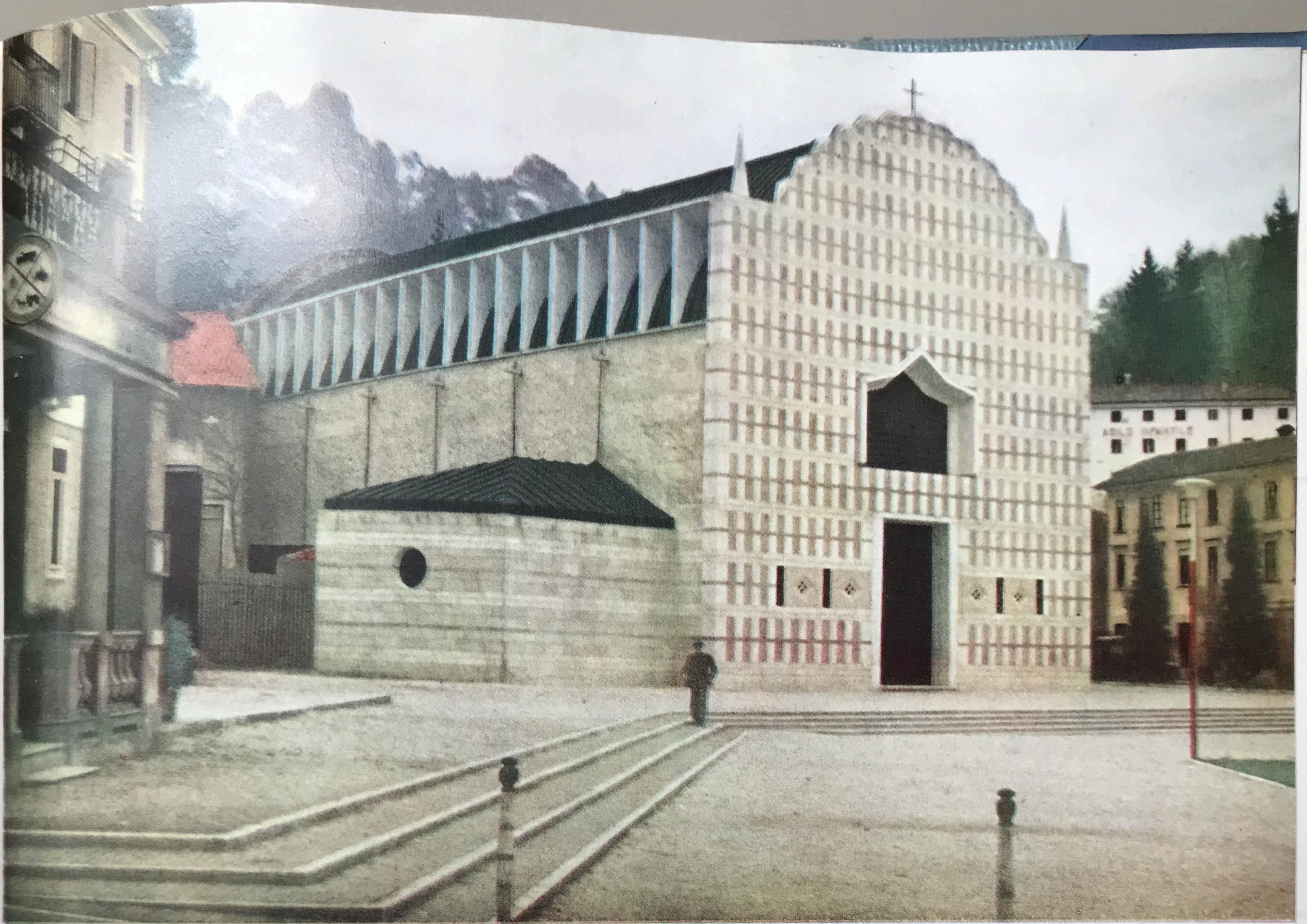


photographs of st. james chapel by william neufeld



In probably no other area of design are there quite so many problems—and satisfactions—as there are in the creation of an environment for religious worship. Environment of course encompasses intangibles, and this is the crux of the problem. Design for religion must fuse architecture and decoration into a physical and emotional entity. In a sense it is pure design. Certainly it is total design. And perhaps most important of all—because it makes such demands upon the taste, talent, and integrity of the designer—it is germinal design, rich with applicable ideas for less demanding circumstances.

The little Chapel of St. James the Fisherman which opens, on these two pages, our review of recent religious design is a particularly felicitous example of how coherent the expression can be. St. James is by the gifted husband-and-wife team of architect Olav Hammarstrom and textile designer Marianne Strengell (above) but the Hammarstroms were fortunate in having for clients a laity and clergy with well-formulated ideas about the chapel's ritual functions. St. James is a seasonal church for summer worshippers in Wellfleet, Massachusetts. Its informal plan returns to the early Christian practice of worshipping "in choir"; clergy and congregation sit together around a central altar. In spite of this intimacy it retains a requisite sense of mystery through dramatic contrasts in light: magnification over the altar (from a skylight of Vascolite skydomes), diminution elsewhere. A frieze of low windows completely around the square Douglas Fir structure illuminates the congregation from an ostensibly unseen source. To intensify the central radiance the altar area is carpeted in black and white tweed and the altar cloth is a heavy white Konwiser linen. The vestments, also white, have stoles and manacles of rough-textured dark green fabric with metallic highlights. The only really brilliant colors are a shocking pink on the altar pillow and a red-orange fabric on the pulpit, both woven by Mrs. Hammarstrom. Mr. Hammarstrom's processional cross (facing page) is of chiselled wood, stained gold, and mounted on a dark bamboo pole wrapped with white cord and set with a scallop shell. The little pavillion adjoining the chapel (left) is for after-service refreshments and reverts to the agapé element, the symbolic feast-of-love, in primitive Christian worship.—*B. D.*



photographs by g. e. kidder smith

St. Antonio Abate, Recoaro

Actually quite a small church, St. Antonio in the Italian Alps, above, gains presence from architect Giuseppe Vaccaro's sensitive inter-relation of colors in reveted marble facade and shallow-stepped approach. Though modest in size, it is by no means mendicant in design. The generosity of statement so immediately apparent in the visual rhythms of exterior surface and structural patterns, continues in the vigorously repeated concrete ribbing of interior barrel vaults, right. Small round windows between ribs light the nave; the altar is lit by a crescent clerestory between nave and chancel roof levels.

