

Focal Points: Worship forming Us

Spring

The stand, from which the Word of God is proclaimed at Mass each Sunday is known Liturgically as the **Ambo**. Other common words used historically to describe it, are “lectern” and “pulpit”. Here at CHS we have quite a beautiful Ambo which matches in style, the altar. This is intentional, not just because of aesthetics but to emphasize the importance of this place in connection to the altar. It also speaks to us of the importance of the Word proclaimed during the celebration of the Eucharist. The two go together.

We do not reverence the ambo as we do the altar. However, we do reverence the Word proclaimed from it. Notice how the presider at Mass, kisses the Book of the Gospels at the end of the reading. He does that in the name of every person gathered at the celebration.

Notice how, when there is music, the Book is processed from the altar, to the Ambo. The book is processed that so that we may honor the Word that is about to be proclaimed from it.



It was fashionable some time back to talk of the Ambo as the Table of the Word, from which we are nourished as a preparation to eat at the Table of the Eucharist.

Now we simply acknowledge the different components that make up the one celebration. The more we understand how we celebrate our faith in a certain way, the more we are able to give of ourselves freely to the ritual.

Notice how our Ambo is fitted with a Gospel book stand on the front. Once the Word has been proclaimed, the book is closed and placed on the stand. The Word is no longer in the book. It is in the hearts of those to whom it was proclaimed. The placing of the Book, reminds us of this. (I often forget to place the Book on the stand. I'm busy being nervous about my homily!)



A microphone is added to assist proclamation but is not essential



The Ambo is placed adjacent to the Altar but slightly behind it . Both are connected but the Altar is our principal focus



The Ambo is also the traditional platform for the preacher who delivers a homily based on the Word proclaimed. In more recent times, the preacher, or homilist as we like to say, prefers to move away from the structure of the Ambo and address the people more directly in a less formal style, though preaching from the Ambo is perfectly acceptable.

The Book of the Gospels is placed on the stand to remind us that the Word is now with us

The person at the Ambo should be visible to everyone gathered in the Worship Space. This is an important Architectural consideration. Even more important, is the person at the Ambo should be audible to everyone. The responsibility of Lector, Deacon and Priest is to be heard clearly and intelligibly. We cannot rely on microphones for this.



Proclaiming the Word of God during the celebration of Mass is a beautiful ministry . Here are a few invaluable tips for anyone who stands at the Ambo:

1. Speak extra slow, slower than you would normally speak. Nerves always make us speak faster!
2. Do not depend on the microphone. Project your voice from the depth of your being.
3. Do not hug the Ambo. Stand comfortably behind with your hands free.
4. In your preparation, take time to pray the words of the scripture you are about to speak. It will render a richer proclamation.
5. Do not worry too much about the correct pronunciation of names. No one will notice!

If you feel called to serve as a Lector, contact our Director of Liturgy, Rosi Viquez:

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