



The Ambo

The word *ambo* derives from the Greek verb *anabainein* ("to go up") and was the name given to the elevated platform from which the scriptures were proclaimed in the large churches of the early Middle Ages. In smaller churches of the time, the priest and lector stood at the altar rail; only the bishop stood at the chair (the cathedra) for proclaiming and preaching. A later development saw elaborate, elevated pulpits attached to church pillars for better visibility and audibility. The liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council (1962 - 1965) called for the location of the ambo to be a natural focal point for the assembly during the liturgy of the word.

The ambo is a place for the act of proclamation. By its form and appearance it

honors Christ present in the word, and hence evokes reverence and attentiveness when the word is sung or spoken from it. Here is the place for the proclamation of the scripture readings, the leading of the singing of psalms, for preaching God's word and perhaps for leading prayers of intercession. All other announcements and speeches are to be made elsewhere.

The ambo should be beautifully designed and carefully proportioned to suit its function — not as a shrine for the lectionary, but as a cradle for the word that embodies the story of our salvation, the mystery of the word made flesh among us.

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