

**The Ambo**, also called the lectern or the pulpit in earlier times, is the place from where the scripture readings are proclaimed and where the homily is most often delivered. The Ambo is the focus of the Liturgy of the Word.

The word 'Ambo' can be little unfamiliar to us. Ambo is a word of Greek origin, supposed to signify a mountain and links with the Bible imagery of going up to the mountain to encounter God and with Jesus teaching from the mountain in St Matthew's Gospel:

'When Jesus saw the crowds, **he went up the mountain**; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying "Blessed are the poor in spirit ..." (Matthew 5).

*In Catholic churches, the Altar typically dominates the sanctuary because our tradition has emphasised the Eucharist as the climax of our worship. However, this worthy emphasis sometimes caused us to slight the role of the Word of God and our Ambos have suffered from sapless designs and insignificant placement.*

*For centuries the priest used to read the Scriptures himself at the altar. Altars had an "Epistle side" and a "Gospel side." Now the Scriptures have their own place, the Ambo.*

*The Ambo's specific purpose provides a place for the Scriptures, the responsorial psalm and the Easter proclamation (the Exultet, proclaimed once a year, only at the Easter Vigil). It may also be used for the homily and the general intercessions (the Prayer of the Faithful). But that's it! It is not the place for announcements, for the priest's opening prayer, for the soloist at the wedding, or the folk choir - unless, of course, they're leading the responsorial psalm. The priest should pray from his chair and the songs and announcements belong at a stand in a different location. We reserve the Ambo for the Word of God.*

*Consequently, the Ambo should look special. It enjoys a fixed place in the sanctuary, not a portable status subject to removal or displacement. Too often we obscure the Ambo with decorations and banners, as if it were merely a hook for hanging pictures, rather than the home for the word of God.*

*It demands dignity of place, room for candles if desired and a location where all can see and hear the reader.*

*Microphones of good quality are essential in most churches. A church's best mikes belong with the Scriptures, not just with the musicians.*

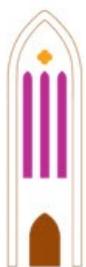
*The Ambo is the primary place from which we hear the Word of God and it deserves our sacred respect.*

*The current Ambo was installed in the Cathedral in the 1983 renovations. It is made from timber and brass with four panels on the front representing the four Gospel writers. These four panels came from the previous ambo, which is made from timber and is the ambo used at St Edwards Church, Canowindra.*

*Italic text is written by: Fr Paul Turner. Copyright © 2012 Resource Publications, Inc., 160 E. Virginia St. #170, San Jose, CA 95112*



**Deacon Paul Simmons reads the Gospel from the Ambo with Nam Dinh Le and Diep Quang Nguyen at the Permanent Deacons Ordination, February 2016**



**The restoration of the Cathedral is an opportune time to look at the internal arrangement of the building and focus on the liturgical suitability of the furnishings and space.**

**This article is Part 3 of a series of articles that explain the importance and meaning of the liturgical furniture and their context in the Cathedral.**