



RENOVATION AND RENEWAL

THE AMBO

(Five of six inserts)

“Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?”

Before the Second Vatican Council, the celebration of the Word (scripture) in our Mass was secondary to the Eucharistic celebration. In fact, older Catholics remember the time when, if you arrived just before the Gospel was read, the Mass “counted” as meeting your Sunday “obligation”. But the liturgical reforms of Vatican II reclaimed the prominence of the Sacred Word of God in liturgy and in the lives of Catholics worldwide. The Council stated that when the Scriptures are proclaimed in the liturgy, Christ himself speaks. The Mass we celebrate reflects the importance that the Church gives to the proclamation and interpretation of Sacred Scripture. Thus it is important that we hear ALL the readings at Mass. So an important part of the renovation is the installation of **new speakers** which should greatly enhance everyone’s ability to listen and to respond to what they have heard.

Today the Catholic Church speaks of **two** tables in its worship:

The Table of Christ’s Body — the Altar **AND** The Table of God’s Word — the **Ambo**
The **ambo** is the liturgical “table” from which the faith community encounters the real presence of God through the Liturgy of the Word. It should be practical, important in appearance, and complementary to the altar and the presider’s chair. Proclaimed from the **ambo**, the faithful hear:

- Readings from the Old and New Testaments
- Responsorial Psalm
- Gospel—the life and teachings of Jesus Christ
- Homily
- Epiphany, Easter and Pentecost Proclamations

Reverence for and belief in the presence of God in the proclaimed Word are demonstrated by:

- The solemn announcement of each reading
- Reverent and thoughtful listening
- Responding aloud, in word and song, in acknowledgement of the Lord’s presence
- Procession of the Book of the Gospel, as it represents Christ’s presence in our midst
- Standing when the Gospel is proclaimed by the Presider
- Sign of the cross on the Book of the Gospel and on our bodies (head, lips and heart)
- Kissing and incensing the Book of the Gospel

From the ambo the Christian community encounters the living Lord in the **word** of God and prepares itself for the “breaking of the bread” and the mission to live the **word** that is proclaimed.

NEXT WEEK: LOOKING AHEAD...