

"Why did Father move the ambo?"

It's a fair question, and one I'm glad you asked. As with all my decisions, it was not taken arbitrarily or quickly. I've actually wanted to move the ambo since I arrived at St. Rose in June of 2023. In my previous two parishes the ambo was on the north side of the sanctuary and for three years I have been very uncomfortable every time I had to preach from the south side. But realizing that most people (especially the elderly) have a very hard time adapting to even minor changes, I decided to wait for an opportune time to move our ambo. This arrived when Leslie Robertson and Mary Jo Trabel very kindly offered to shampoo the carpet in church. I am very grateful to them for not only seeing a need and telling me about it, but also offering to take care of it themselves. They did a wonderful job! And judging from the amount of dirt they removed we wonder if the carpets in church have *ever* been cleaned. Sometime in the future I expect our church will have no carpet at all. Hard floors improve the acoustics and are much easier to clean. But for now, I'd like to share with you the four main reasons I decided to move the ambo. I hope that you will be able to accept these reasons even if you don't agree with them. More importantly, I hope you will still be able to pray well at Mass even though something has changed, as everything in life eventually must. St. John Henry Newman said, "To live is to change; to be perfect is to have changed often. Only dead things do not change." The relocation of our ambo is:

Historical- The new placement of the ambo is not something that was never done before. I have heard from lifelong parishioners and seen in old photographs that the ambo used to be where it now is. The "change" has not just occurred but took place whenever it was moved out of its original location.

Liturgical- In the Catholic Church nothing, no matter how small, is arbitrary or without significance. Traditionally ambos have been placed on the northern side of the sanctuary because, in the Traditional Latin Mass, the reading was read from the right side of the altar and the Gospel proclaimed from the left side. This is because, if you are in Rome, facing north meant looking in the direction of the barbarian Germanic hordes who lived in spiritual and physical darkness. The Gospel was thereby proclaimed in the direction of the people who needed to hear it. We modern-day priests now joke that when we read the Gospel on the northern side of the sanctuary we are proclaiming it towards Michigan and Canada!

Medical- I'm sure you've noticed by now that I don't see so well out of my right eye. When the ambo was in its old location I had a very good view of the southern wall of the church but could not see you the people very well. In its current location I don't see the northern wall as clearly but you are now in focus. I'd rather see you than a wall.

Practical- Saying Mass and preaching is literally my job. That means the sanctuary is my workspace and the ambo is one of my tools. I humbly request the ability to place the tools in my workshop in the place that best helps me to do my job.