

The Faith Craft Aumbry and Sanctuary Lamp originally from the Parish Church of St. Peter, Upper Gornal, Staffordshire and now re-homed at the Parish Church of St. Peter, Cradley, Worcestershire

Researched by James Brookes & Charles Morgan

September 2024



The carved aumbry was made by Faith Craft of St. Albans, Hertfordshire in 1966 when an order for an aumbry was placed by St. Peter's Church, Upper Gornal, then in the Diocese of Lichfield (the parish was transferred to the Diocese of Worcester in 1993) by the Vicar, Fr. Ivor John Butler.

It is first mentioned in a parish magazine from May 1966, when on Mothering Sunday, Fr. Butler suggested that an aumbry be obtained for the church in order to reserve the Blessed Sacrament. Designs were looked into and a faculty obtained.

A white Sanctuary Lamp would be placed nearby to denote the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. The cost of the aumbry and its installation was met by an anonymous donation.

The aumbry was to be placed in the north wall of the Lady Chapel.

Later in the year an order was presumably placed with Faith Craft as the aumbry and sanctuary lamp we dedicated and blessed at the Parish Eucharist on Sunday 18th December 1966.

Again a brief report appears in the Parish Magazine to say that the outer door of the aumbry was the work of Faith Craft. Thanks was given to John Lawson and his craftsmen and also to Mr Fidler and Mr Davies of the parish for carrying out the fitting and installation.

In the early 1980's a new Tabernacle was given by the then vicar, Fr Nicholas Reade (who would later go on to become the Bishop of Blackburn), which sat on the High Altar. It appears that around this time, the Blessed Sacrament was moved from the Faith Craft aumbry in the Lady Chapel to the new High Altar tabernacle and the Faith Craft aumbry was not used. Presumably when this happened, the sanctuary lamp from the aumbry was moved to near the Oberammergau statue of Our Lady and Child at the entrance of the Lady Chapel.



The exterior of St Peter's, Upper Gornal



The Lady Chapel of St Peter's, Upper Gornal with the aumbry on the left under the window



The aumbry in situ at St Peter's, Upper Gornal



The Faith Craft sanctuary lamp re-sited next to the statue of Our Lady and Child

The Annual General Meeting took up a plea that I had made in my sermon at Evensong on Mothering Sunday. The plea was for the Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament in Church for the Communion of the sick. It has happened on a number of occasions that someone who is ill has wanted their communion at short notice and there has been no time to consecrate the Sacrament for them, and it has had to be fetched from another church. With the increasing work among the sick in hospital and in the parish, this need for Reservation has grown. Some 600 communions to the sick were given in 1965, and this figure is growing. The place of reservation will be a safe or aumbry in the North Wall of the Lady Chapel with a white sanctuary lamp to denote the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. In the Aumbry are placed the hosts consecrated at a celebration of Holy Communion. The hosts will have been tinted, that is touched with a tiny drop of the consecrated wine so that Holy Communion will be given to the sick in both kinds together. The reason for this is that it is extremely difficult to carry and to give the consecrated wine in Holy Communion to the sick. The cost of the aumbry is being met by a very generous anonymous donation. At the time of going to press we are going into the question of designs and once that is settled, then a faculty will be obtained.

Parish magazine article from May 1966 written by the vicar Fr. Butler

THE AUMBRY is now complete. On December 18th it was dedicated at the Parish Eucharist, at which the preacher was the Rural Dean, Prebendary T. Woolley. The outer door is a work of great beauty, finely executed by Faith Craft of St. Alban's. One comment was "It has taken a long time, but it was worth waiting for. We are extremely grateful to Mr. John Lawson of Faith Craft and his craftsmen, and also to Mr. Fidler and Mr. Davies for installing the aumbry and its fittings. All of us owe a great debt of gratitude to the anonymous donors, who by their generosity made all this possible.

Parish magazine article from December 1966 written by the vicar Fr. Butler

By 2018, the church building required an estimated £500,000 worth of repairs to the roof, stonework and heating system. During the winter months, the congregation worshipped in the church hall next door, only using the church during the summer. Following COVID-19 the Diocese of Worcester and the PCC decided to move worship into the church hall full-time and cease using the church building.

The church building was officially closed on 18th January 2023 by the Church Commissioners.

Meanwhile, five miles south of Upper Gornal in Cradley, at the Parish Church of St Peter, the congregation and priest were slowly introducing a more “High Church” style of worship. The church has historically been “Low Church” as it was originally founded as a Methodist Chapel in 1789, however, during the last few years there has been a desire to embrace more Anglo-Catholic traditions. Second hand vestments had been acquired and were now in use. When the organist at Cradley, James Brookes, discovered that Upper Gornal was being closed, enquiries were made with the diocese and an offer made to re-home any ecclesiastical items that were no longer required when worship moved into the church hall.

A number of years later access was given to the church building in order to retrieve items for use at Cradley. A number of items were saved including the statue of Our Lady and Child (which was carved in Oberammergau), a sanctuary lamp from the sanctuary, processional lanterns and the Faith Craft aumbry and sanctuary lamp.



The exterior of St Peter's, Cradley.

The Faith Craft aumbry, together with the statue of Our Lady and Child, has been placed in the Bloomer Memorial Chapel on the south side of the church, which is also looked upon as a Lady Chapel. The Faith Craft sanctuary lamp has been placed in the side chapel dedicated to St. Margaret on the north side of the church to replace a silver sanctuary lamp that disappeared in the early 2000's during redecorations.

The aumbry door had suffered water damage and loss of paint detail over the years. Former Cradley church warden and congregation member, John Clifton, kindly attended to the door. He repaired the water damage, including a split to the surround. He touched up the paintwork where necessary but left as much of it in original condition as possible.



Before restoration



John Clifton with the repaired door

Following the granting of a faculty from the Diocese of Worcester, the aumbry was ready to be installed. Local carpenter, Lee Jones installed the aumbry during August 2024. When the wall panelling was removed, it revealed the remnants of the 1930's decoration. Lee carried out the work in a sensitive way and the final result is magnificent.

Many people have commented on it and said that it looks like it has always been there.



The wall panel removed revealing the 1930's colour scheme



Lee cuts out the hole for the safe



The safe is fixed in position



Lee with the aumbry installed

The aumbry is now in use as originally intended and holds the Blessed Sacrament following consecration.

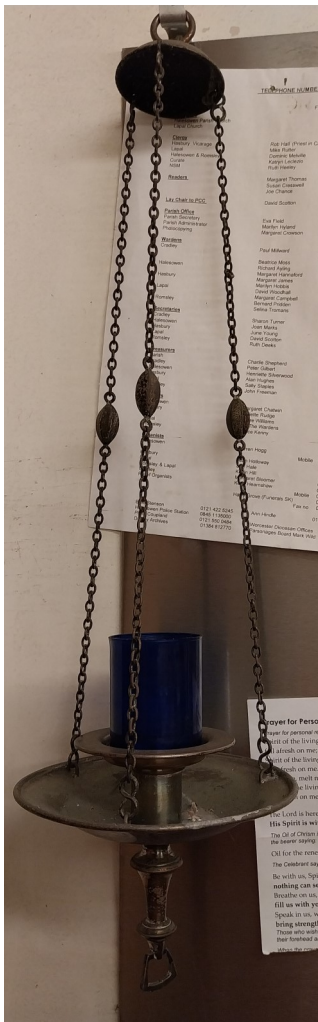


The silver sanctuary lamp that originally accompanied the aumbry in 1966 has been cleaned and installed at Cradley in St Margaret's Chapel which dates back to 1936.

The chapel was created in memory of Margaret Olive Dunn who died aged six in 1935. As part of the original furnishings, a silver sanctuary lamp was included.

However by the 21st century some fittings were removed during redecorations and not returned.

As there was already a sanctuary lamp which held seven day candles in the Bloomer Memorial Chapel, it was decided to use the lamp from Upper Gornal to replace the one missing from St Margaret's Chapel.



Before cleaning



After cleaning



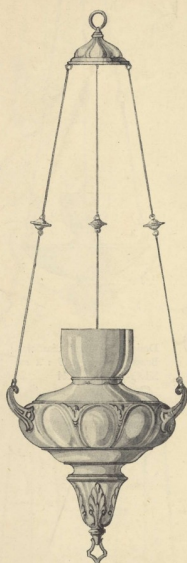
SANCTUARY and AUMBRY LAMPS

FINE WORKMANSHIP

GOOD DESIGN

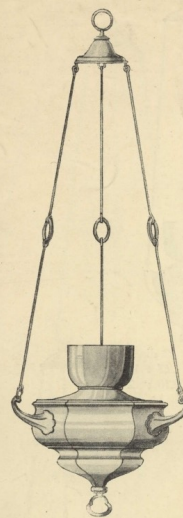
Any of the lamps can be made smaller or larger

The lamps can be made in other metals than those quoted

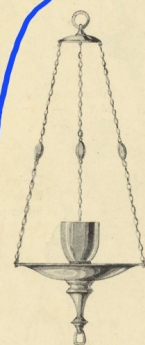


Design "S." 14" diameter.
Brass £46
Silver-plated £53

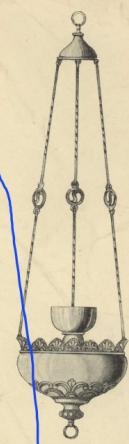
THE FAITH CRAFT-WORKS, LTD.
7 TUFTON STREET, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W. 1
(TELEPHONE : ABBEY 4927)



Design "G." 12" diameter.
Brass £37 : 10 —
Silver-plated £42 : 7 : 6



Design "V." 10" diameter.
Brass £21
Silver-plated £25



Design "D." 10" diameter.
Brass £30
Silver-plated £34 : 17 : 6

The Faith Craft also design and make—

STAINED GLASS

WOODWORK

STATUARY

VESTMENTS

FRONTALS

BANNERS

and give expert advice upon all questions concerning the furnishing of Churches.



Detail of the Faith Craft
sanctuary lamp

Faith Craft Aumbry and Sanctuary Lamp

1966 - 2023

St Peter's Church

Kent Street

Upper Gornal

Sedgley

Staffordshire

DY3 1UU

Diocese of Lichfield until 1993,
Diocese of Worcester thereafter

[www.achurchnearyou.com/
church/33345](http://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/33345)

2024 onwards

St Peter's Church

Church Road

Cradley

Halesowen

Worcestershire

B63 2UL

Diocese of Worcester

[www.churchnearyou.com/
church/18744](http://www.churchnearyou.com/church/18744)