

Corrected text for page 29 of *The Seven Sacraments* by Stratford Caldecott

1. **Offertory (Ordination).** Now we move from the Liturgy of the Word to the heart of the Mass. The congregation offers bread and wine prepared on their behalf for the priest to consecrate. A collection plate may be passed around. These tokens represent human work and lives, as well as the whole created world that has entered into the making of these substances—through the soil, the plants, the farm animals who played their part, indeed even the lowly earthworm that tilled the soil, the wind and rain and sunshine. The priest takes these gifts and offers them to God. He invokes the Holy Spirit. This is what the office of priest exists for: the priest is a living *epiclesis* (invocation). The whole world—and not just the human world—is involved in the liturgy, and all that has been offered here will be raised up on the last day as part of a resurrection earth.
2. **Consecration (Eucharist).** The Last Supper was the anticipation of the Passion or death of our Lord on the Cross, which in turn was the earthly image and incarnation of the eternal sacrifice in heaven. The priest raises up all our earthly giving, every aspect of our lives that has not been deliberately held back or turned away from God's face, to become a part of the self-giving of the Son to the Father, in heaven as it is on earth. The consecration, bound up as it is with the invocation, takes place (in the view of most Catholic theologians) when the priest utters the words of Christ, "This is my body...." At that moment Christ is speaking directly through the priest. Sacramental priesthood gives way to the real thing, as Christ takes up all that we have offered and includes it in the gift of his own body and blood, the living bread which came down from heaven for the life of the world.