

ROAD NARROWS AT THE VATICAN?

Did Christ Die 'For Many' or 'For All'?

Wolfgang Beinert

IN 2006 A NOTE, DATED 17 OCTOBER, was delivered to the presidents of bishops' conferences from Cardinal Francis Arinze, Prefect of the Liturgical Congregation. It said that the Congregation was writing, on the Pope's instructions, to the following effect: by 2008, in all new translations of the Missal, the words spoken over the chalice in the institution narrative, *pro multis*, should no longer be translated as 'for all', but as 'for many'.¹ Perhaps because Christmas was close when the letter became public, hardly any attention was paid to this apparently inoffensive instruction at first—and the fact that the letter, scarcely one side long, could not be downloaded from the Vatican website as most other Vatican documents can, promptly and carefully translated, may have played a part too. Apparently it was translated into German only by the right-wing Catholic news agency *kreuz.net*; and they quoted Catholic World News (CWN) as their source. The translated text on the *kreuz.net* website is immediately followed by 'Readers' views'.² Reading these latter dispels any impression that Cardinal Arinze's letter is just a routine Vatican instruction on translation.

The expressions of opinion, mostly anonymous, promulgated by *kreuz.net*, welcome the new instruction, but not everyone is persuaded that it goes far enough:

In view of the problems, particularly the liturgical ones (the doubtful validity of the sacraments since 1969) and the soteriological-ecclesiological ones (the Catholic Church is no longer seen as necessary for salvation), brought into the Church through the

¹ See letter from Cardinal Francis Arinze on the translation of *pro multis*, http://www.usccb.org/romanmissal/translating_arinze_letter.shtml.

² See <http://www.kreuz.net/article.4231.html>.

Council and the spurious popes since 1958, the revision ordered by Rome of wrong translations of the words of consecration in the new rite of the Mass is like trying vainly to cure a bowel-cancer patient by removing his appendix!³

Another comment welcomes the ‘all-too-long awaited blow against the *apokatastasis*-doctrine reigning in Central Europe’.

This last point raises a fundamental question concerning the basic teachings of the Christian religion: who can hope for final salvation? Did Christ die on the cross for all people, or only for some? Have we resurrected Augustine’s teachings according to which humanity is a *massa damnata*, condemned to Hell collectively, with only a few being picked out for mercy? Is the Roman Catholic Church once again to be presented as the ‘only source of holiness’, even though it has distanced itself from this understanding since 1854, and particularly clearly in the last Council? Or is there finally a ‘universal reconciliation’—in Greek *apokatastasis*—as Origen maintained in the early Church? (Long after his death, Origen was condemned by the Church for this opinion.) Will absolutely everybody get to heaven—even Hitler, Himmler, Pol Pot and Saddam Hussein?

Such questions are far from abstract and academic. They always involve asking ‘What about me? What chance do I have?’ Countless people suffer indescribably under the threat that they might be destined for eternal damnation. The question of whether Christ shed his blood for many or for all became controversial once ‘for all’ and its equivalents appeared in the official liturgical books. In the linguistic usage of most countries, including Germany, ‘for many’ is a clear limitation by comparison. *All* is universal and leaves no one out, *many* is particular and divisive.

About two months after the Vatican document was sent out, an extraordinarily lively debate began; it was no doubt initially provoked by the document, but went on to discuss the wider problems just named. Maybe it was so intense because there were rumours in the air that the Vatican was going to rehabilitate the Tridentine Mass, the pre-conciliar rite, as indeed happened in July 2007. In the major regional daily newspapers in Germany, and in numerous Catholic periodicals,

³ See <http://www.kreuz.net/article.4231.html>.

opinion pieces and readers' letters appeared—mostly tending to oppose the change, but with some in support. No one can doubt the significance of the issues surrounding the Vatican instruction. But what exactly is it about?

The Reasons

At the heart of the debate lie the liturgical words of consecration spoken over the chalice. In the Latin original, they run:

Accipite et bibite ex eo omnes: hic est enim calyx Sanguinis mei, novi et eterni testamenti, qui pro vobis et pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum. Hoc facite in meam commemorationem.

The current official English translation says:

Take this, all of you, and drink from it: this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed *for you and for all* so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me.⁴

The Italian, Spanish, German and Portuguese versions translate in the same way. The French has the imprecise formula *la multitude*, 'the many', which gets round the problem. One cannot deny that all these translations were, once upon a time, more than a generation ago, approved and allowed by the church authorities, right up to Rome itself.

If we follow Arinze, then in future the wording must be: 'shed for you and for many'. But why? The situation cries out for an explanation. The Cardinal Prefect makes it clear at the beginning of the document that there is no intention to declare Masses with the universalist formulation invalid—as many fundamentalists (see above) have claimed—and no limitation is implied on the universality of Christ's saving death. 'It is a dogma of faith that Christ died on the cross for all men and women.'⁵ So we need to press the question: what is this alteration for? Arinze gives six reasons:

⁴ The original German version of this article quoted the Missal in German. This passage has been modified to present the English text.

⁵ Letter from Cardinal Francis Arinze, n. 2.

1. the wording of the biblical institution narratives is ‘for many’;
2. in the Roman rite the Latin has always been *pro multis* and not *pro omnibus*;
3. the same is true of the Eastern anaphorae (Eucharistic prayers);
4. ‘for all’ is not a translation but an explanation, of the kind proper to catechesis;
5. ‘for all’ might imply that salvation just happens automatically;
6. the Roman instruction on translation of 2001 requires translation into vernacular languages to be as literal as possible. *Pro multis* never means ‘for all’.

These six reasons can be reduced to three arguments: from the Bible, from liturgical history and from theology; and we shall need to look at all three.

But first we should note a tantalising fact. Arinze’s letter appeared about seventeen months after another letter. It was Pope John Paul II’s custom to publish a general letter to all priests for Maundy Thursday. In his last such letter, for Maundy Thursday 2005—he died a few days later—he went into our theme in a few, but very precise, lines. The emphasis is original.

Hoc est enim corpus meum quod pro vobis tradetur. The body and the blood of Christ are given for the salvation of man, of the *whole* man and of *all* men. This salvation is *integral* and at the same time *universal*, because no one, unless he freely chooses, is excluded from the saving power of Christ’s blood: *qui pro vobis et pro multis effundetur*. It is a sacrifice offered for ‘many’, as the Biblical text says (Mark 14:24; Matthew 26:28; cf. Isaiah 53:11–12); this typical Semitic expression refers to the multitude who are saved by Christ, the one Redeemer, yet at the same time it implies *the totality of human beings* to whom salvation is offered: the Lord’s blood is ‘*shed for you and for all*’, as some translations legitimately make explicit. Christ’s flesh is truly given ‘for the life of the world’ (John 6:51; cf. 1 John 2:2).⁶

We are faced here with an extraordinary fact. The Pope himself, in an official document which obviously ranks higher than the utterance

⁶ John Paul II, letter to priests for Holy Thursday 2005, n. 4, at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/letters/2005/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_20050313_priests-holy-thursday_en.html.

of a subordinate authority in the Vatican, adopts quite unequivocally a view which, not eighteen months later, will be declared practically null and void. One would really not have thought that the shelf-life of papal pronouncements could be so short.

Can the reason for this anomaly be that John Paul II's successor has a different theology? Arinze writes 'at [the Pope's] direction'. Is this only a standard formula, or is it meant literally? According to his own statement, Joseph Ratzinger's *Eschatology*, published shortly before he became Archbishop of Munich and Freising in 1977, and printed in a new edition in 2007, is one of his most important works. In it he discusses the teaching of Origen on universal salvation (a teaching which is also to be found in Buddhism). This, he concludes, does not follow 'from the biblical witness The irrevocable takes place, and that includes ... eternal destruction.'⁷ This conclusion is surprising, since Ratzinger's close theological friend Hans Urs von Balthasar thought quite differently and was very sympathetic towards Origen. Be all this as it may, it is not impossible that Pope Benedict XVI believed that, in taking his own theological line, he should abandon that of his predecessor, otherwise frequently invoked. All these things must be taken into account, but we shall turn our attention now to the range of biblical, liturgical and dogmatic issues that the document raises.

The Scope of Salvation in Holy Scripture

For many, the words of consecration used to have an almost magical significance. It was impressed upon candidates for the priesthood that they should recite them absolutely clearly and without mistakes. The ethics textbook I had to study stated that anyone who said *colpus meum* instead of *Hoc est corpus meum* had said an invalid Mass. So it came like a cold shower to learn that the formula was simply a tissue of old texts, which were not to be found in that form anywhere in the Bible, and which Jesus absolutely certainly had not said on Maundy Thursday. The liturgical words are a free composition, which for that very reason can claim no sacrosanct character. So there are, as I shall show, different versions. Today, also, we understand better that they centre around a narrative, and that what matters is the whole story, not individual

⁷ Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life* (Washington: CUA Press, 2007 [1988]), 216–217. German original: *Eschatologie: Tod und ewiges Leben* (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1990 [1977]).



The Last Supper, by Hans Holbein the Younger

words. A look at the Missal shows that in general the Eucharistic Prayers are addressed to the Father. When it comes to speak of the Son's saving action, it changes to report form.

The prayers are here relying on the four so-called institution narratives that the New Testament hands down to us. These are to be found in the Synoptic Gospels and in St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. They can easily enough be arranged into pairs: Matthew and Mark belong together, as do Luke and Paul. Evidently they come from two different strands of tradition, one of which is located in Alexandria, the other in Jerusalem. Equally clearly, research shows, they are taken from the liturgy celebrated in those places, and so are making no claim to be verbatim reports of the Last Supper.

What do they say about the point being disputed here? Let us listen to the authors:

For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out *for many* for the forgiveness of sins. (Matthew 26:28)

This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out *for many*. (Mark 14:24)

This cup that is poured out *for you* is the new covenant in my blood. (Luke 22:20)

And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body that is *for you*. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood ...' (1 Corinthians 11:24–25)

The Lucan-Pauline tradition, then, lacks the 'many' which is found in both of the other witnesses; but they in their turn omit the 'you'. This can be explained when one thinks of the liturgical situation: it is the community members actually present who are being addressed as 'you'. Obviously the holy gifts are there in the first instance for them. They are to receive them in communion. But it must be borne in mind that the Pauline communities saw themselves as the people of all peoples (see Galatians 3:26–28, for example), and that therefore a marked universalism was in the air even at the celebration of the Lord's Supper, for all that it was not thought through any further at this point. But then, what does 'many' mean in Matthew and Mark? This is where the exegetical and theological arguments really begin.

Let us listen first of all to our own language. In everyday speech 'many' means fewer than 'all', but more than 'few'. It is when the article is added—'the many'—that ambiguity sets in. This expression can indicate a large number: 'The many school-leavers this year will not all find a place in further education'. But it can in practice mean the same as 'all'. I go through the city crowds and say 'Look at the many people who are shopping today!' Naturally I do not mean just the people on the right-hand side of the street, but all those to be seen. There are places in the Bible where, likewise, the article is present—*hoi polloi*—and all are meant.

But that does not take us any further: there is no article in our disputed passages. Nevertheless, might it mean 'all'? The exegetes are in agreement that there is an allusion to a text from Isaiah. In the fourth *Song of the Servant*—a mysterious figure who points towards the Messiah—it says (53:12): 'He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors'. Joachim Jeremias, who did considerable work on

our texts and had great influence on Catholic exegetes, believes that we have here a typical Semitic form of words. It refers to 'all'. John Paul II also took this view. Thomas Söding explains:

The point of the word 'many' is not that it is not all who benefit from the Servant's work, but 'only' many. The point is rather that those who sing the song do not shift the blame for the Just One's suffering onto a few people only, but include themselves and all those whom they have before their eyes: the 'many' are 'we'; and 'we' the perpetrators are not 'few' but 'many'.⁸

In Semitic languages the word 'many' has an inclusive, not an exclusive, meaning. 'Many' means 'all'. The only further point of discussion would be whether Isaiah, and consequently Matthew and Mark in their Last Supper texts, are thinking only of 'all Jews', or are also including the Gentile peoples—who would be, with the Jews, 'all people'.

But the consistently universalist character of the New Testament is indisputable. We have been urged by many Catholic exegetes, emphatically supported by Joseph Ratzinger, not to analyze biblical texts in isolation, but in terms of 'canonical exegesis', that is, against the background of the whole canon of scripture. If we do so, it is soon clear that God's saving will embraces all creatures who are made in God's image, and that what happens in Christ happens in order to promote this will. Paul says quite plainly, in a text that is highly significant for his theology,

If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. (Romans 5:17–18)

The 'one' Jesus Christ is set in contrast to the 'one' Adam, but they are both alike in that their actions concern the whole of humanity, without exception. More precisely, it may be said that anyone who

⁸ Thomas Söding, 'Für euch—für viele—für alle. Für wen feiert die Kirche die Eucharistie?', *Christ in der Gegenwart*, 59 (2007), 21–22.

denies the universality of salvation also denies the generality of sin and thereby the need for redemption. So, likewise, the author of the first letter to Timothy can declare categorically that God,

... desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself a ransom for all. (1 Timothy 2:4–6)

John echoes this idea in a Eucharistic context: ‘the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh’ (John 6:51).

I am taking these passages as sufficient evidence, though it would be very easy to cite more examples. These alone make it clear that the command ‘Do this in memory of me’ indicates that the salvific action being performed by Jesus reaches beyond the historical moment of the Last Supper. According to the New Testament, however, it can only do this if those present at the meal—‘you’—represent at the same time the people who are affected by what Jesus does. And these are ‘all people’.

The Liturgical Tradition

The second argument in the document of 17 October 2006 brings forward the unanimous liturgical tradition against the translation ‘for all’. This is the weakest link in the chain. It is true, of course, that the Latin model-text reads *pro multis*, which means, as every first-year Latin student knows, ‘for many’. If one follows the 2001 Vatican instruction for translators, which calls for word-for-word translation, it has to be rendered that way. If that had been done from the beginning, the whole excitement would be unnecessary, and it could have been left to catechesis to explain the correct meaning.

When the liturgical books were being translated into German in the 1970s, the commission responsible reproduced *multis* as *die Vielen*—‘the many’—in the text they put forward to the bishops’ conferences of German-speaking countries for their approval. The approval duly ensued. But then it was discovered that Rome had approved the Italian version *per tutti*—‘for all’—and the German version was altered accordingly, and was approved by the Vatican just as the Italian version had been. At any rate, the equivalent of ‘for all’ is now the official text in many languages. If we are to retrace our steps, we need good reasons

for doing so. And, as has already been said, the argument from liturgical history does not amount to one.

For there has simply never been one continuously used form of the institution narrative, one 'way it always has been'. We already know why: at least at the beginning—the New Testament itself is the best evidence—it was not seen as a quasi-magical form of words, as it was later. The expression *hocus-pocus* is, significantly, a corruption of *hoc est corpus*, the words of consecration over the bread. But originally it was the *story* of Maundy Thursday that was inserted into the Eucharistic prayer—and a story remains substantially the same, even if single words vary.

Arinze's letter cites the Eastern anaphora, but it is only in the Syriac tradition that we find 'for many'. In the oldest texts, such as the *Traditio apostolica*, it says simply 'for you'. The Roman liturgy has lumped the two together. In 1523 Luther adopted only *pro multis* in the Latin text of his *Formula Missae*. But in the *German Mass* of 1525/26 he referred only to the formula in 1 Corinthians, and therefore has only 'for you'. It can hardly be maintained, therefore, that liturgical tradition justifies one decision being presented as 'what it has always been'. And if we are going to use this sort of argument anyway, then we should consider one indubitably valid text from the present-day liturgy. In the special form of the Roman Canon of the Mass (Eucharistic Prayer I) used on Holy Thursday, the institution narrative speaks of Christ suffering *pro nostra omniumque salute*—'for our salvation and that of all'. That is the ancient tradition. It is undoubtedly universalist.

Dogmatic Issues

The real significance of the debate set in motion by the letter lies in its dogmatic background. It concerns God's saving power and humanity's hope for salvation. This effectively brings up the question of the significance of religion in general. If it is to mean anything at all, then it means the fulfilment of human existence as it moves into the transcendent, the divine fullness of life. All religions fundamentally agree on that. What is distinctive in Christianity, compared with all others, is that this salvation is brought about through Christ: something at root historical and concrete on the one hand, but universal in scope on the other. There is now, for all ages, only one single mediator.



The Last Supper, by Joos van Cleve

In a text peppered with scriptural quotations, the Second Vatican Council sheds light on the foundation of Christianity. The ‘universal design of God for the salvation of the human race’ is carried out through the sending of the Son,

... clothed in our flesh, in order that through Him He might snatch men from the power of darkness and Satan (see Colossians 1:13; Acts 10:38) and reconcile the world to Himself in Him (see 2 Corinthians 5:19). Him, then, by whom He made the world, (3) He appointed heir of all things, that in Him He might restore all (see Ephesians 1:10).⁹

After the Council Fathers have gone into the christological significance of the incarnation as Christ’s taking on the whole reality of the world, they close this section of the decree on missions with the following sentence:

... what the Lord preached that one time, or what was wrought in Him for the saving of the human race, must be spread abroad ... so

⁹ *Ad gentium*, n.3.

that what He accomplished at that one time for the salvation of all, may in the course of time come to achieve its effect in all.¹⁰

No one in the Church would deny that the institution of the Eucharist belongs to the once-for-all acts of salvation. We have quoted the essential texts. But then it follows quite clearly that the words of institution are to be interpreted universally. 'For all' is therefore an accurate formulation, as the prefect of the Liturgical Congregation expressly confirmed:

The formula 'for all' would undoubtedly correspond to a correct interpretation of the Lord's intention expressed in the text. It is a dogma of faith that Christ died on the Cross for all men and women.¹¹

Once again it must be asked: why, then, this whole business?

Possibly the readers' letters to the *kreuz.net* agency, quoted earlier, put us on the right track. It may well be that God *wills* the salvation of all people in Christ—but does God put this will into effect? Many theologians, including one as eminent as Hans Urs von Balthasar, incline to an unqualified yes. Others, such as Joseph Ratzinger, cast doubt. They fear, paradoxical though this may sound, for human freedom if God is so free as to bestow salvation on all people. What happens if creatures, with full knowledge and complete consent, refuse God's salvation for themselves? If God were free to force it on them all the same, God would take away their humanity with this freedom. So God must leave them free to go to hell.

Again and again in the history of theology there have been attempts somehow to restrict God's universal salvific will, often taking the form of predestination theories: God is said to have destined some people to salvation from the beginning, and others to damnation. The most important proponent of such theories was Augustine. One driving conviction here was that of the universality of original sin, another that of the absolute necessity of the Catholic Church for salvation. Thus at one time all non-Catholics were considered destined for the eternal fire—a *massa damnata* indeed

¹⁰ *Ad gentium*, n.3.

¹¹ Letter from Cardinal Francis Arinze, n.2.

Interestingly, many people today, who do not necessarily know the arguments from theological history, believe firmly that salvation is only for particular people. They are happily ensconced in fundamentalist ways of thinking. Significant academic opinion is agreed that fundamentalism is a matter primarily not of world-view, but of psychology. It arises from a sense of all-pervading anxiety. Fundamentalists have damnation more or less constantly before their eyes. They think they will escape by having recourse to their particular world-view, for example the Christian one, and keeping strictly to its fundamentals, or to what they regard as its fundamentals. This costs them great effort; it is not easy. For fundamentalists, like all human beings, have their own natural drives against which they are struggling. As they see it, they have really earned their reward, which must be exclusively *theirs*. It is not right that others, who are more lax in theology, morality or both, should lay claim to it as well. Salvation for everybody seems to them just horrendous.

Be all that as it may, the pressing question for morally and religiously serious people has to be whether *they* are destined for salvation. Salvation would of course be guaranteed if God's *saving will* were tantamount to God's *saving deed*—if all people were to be saved, without exception. The doctrine of universal reconciliation presented this conviction as an established fact. For that reason, and for that reason only, it was condemned. But the view that we may *hope* for this outcome was never condemned. Hope *knows* nothing; it only has grounds. And there are grounds for hope. The strongest of these become clear when we think through what it is for God's will to be directed towards our salvation.

What follows from this fact? If we human beings want something, we often have not the slightest influence on whether or not our wish is fulfilled. We may wish someone on their birthday many happy returns, but it is scarcely in our power to keep that person alive for another year. It is part of the tragedy of our relationships that our wishes (including, thank God, our wicked ones) often remain ineffective, mere declarations of intent.

But it is different with God. If we call God 'almighty', we mean that God is in a position to carry out God's will. 'God said "Let there be light". And there was light.' (Genesis 1:3) So if God wills the salvation of all people, will there not be, without fail—as in the creation of light—salvation for all people here? This can also be looked at from the



The Last Supper, by Tintoretto

other point of view: what would happen if God's will, like human wills, mostly came to nothing? If only *one* child of God, *one single* person in God's image and likeness, were to fall into eternal destruction, would we not have to conclude that the whole of creation, or at least the creation of human beings as children of God and images of God, was a terrible failure on God's part? The whole of creation would be a horrible nonsense—to say nothing of the religion that accepted such an account of things.

But we still have to insist on freedom. There is no way round it: if a free person sets himself or herself definitively and deliberately against God's will, then God must surely leave that person free and follow through on the consequences: eternal destruction, final exclusion from salvation. Following this logic, a number of texts in the New Testament speak of judgment having two possible outcomes: one of damnation as well as one of salvation. And since it cannot be known with certainty that there is no one who will ever be damned, there cannot be any certainty about a universal redemption. It could be that indeed Christ died 'for all', but that his will was carried through only 'for many'. We must therefore say, minimally, that the *apokatastasis* theory claims too much. But provided we stop short of that doctrine, there is no objection to our thinking in such terms.

The reality of God's infinite freedom, the existence of limited human freedoms: these seem to be in conflict, in competition. Resolution comes from God's side, so the scriptures imply—a resolution that occurs only because God suffers this conflict within Godself. Redemption was not achieved through a word of divine power in thunder and lightning, but through the death-pangs of a human being, who was denounced as a criminal, but who was also God and gave himself totally in his freedom. The letter to the Philippians speaks in shocking terms of *kenosis*—which means an emptying, a stripping away, a surrender of the core of his being. With this goes the giving up of self-determination: he who was equal with God 'emptied himself, taking the form of a slave' (Philippians 2:7).

The creed took this idea further in the fourth century, developing a more radical formulation still: the descent of the one who was God and human into the realm of death—death here understood as complete inability to communicate, not being able to express oneself at all, not being able to want anything any more. The reality of salvation derives, then, from God's subjection to humanity's 'no'. Yet, even as human will prevails against God's will, God's will prevails against human will—not because of God's superior power, but because of God's suffering. This is possible because God's infinity, with its 'yes', is greater than the provisionality of any creaturely 'no', any creaturely refusal. Hans Urs von Balthasar sees here, with justification, a mitigation of the doctrine of the two possible outcomes of judgment, so that 'hope outweighs fear'.¹²

Once again: these are speculations, not conclusions that can be absolutely proven. But, if we can take von Balthasar as an authority, they are certainly well grounded theologically. Moreover, these speculations also affect our understanding of the Eucharist, and still more of the Eucharistic assembly. We live in hope precisely when we celebrate the Eucharist, the 'sacrifice of reconciliation'. The Eucharist is addressed not to 'many' but to 'all'. Why should we not be allowed to include this in what we profess when we celebrate? Sometimes God's ways seem like wide streets. They should be left open.

¹² Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Dare We Hope: 'That All Men Be Saved'?* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 44. German original: Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Was dürfen wir hoffen?* (Einsiedeln: Johannes, 1986), 36.

In his 'Bishop's Word' of 25 February 2007, the Bishop of Fulda, Heinz Josef Algermissen, refers to John Paul II's Maundy Thursday text, quoted above.¹³ He goes on to quote at length from the sermon 'The Origin of the Eucharist in the Paschal Mystery', preached when the author, Joseph Ratzinger, was the Archbishop of Munich. Ratzinger here dealt in great theological depth with the two formulae, 'for many' and 'for all', and addressed the claim that the latter amounted to a distortion:

As far as the reality of the matter is concerned, there is no distortion here. For whichever formula stands, we must in any case hear the whole of the message: that the Lord really loves everyone and has died for everyone. And also the other point: that he does not push our freedom aside, playing some sort of game with a conjuring trick, but rather lets us say our 'yes', a 'yes' leading into His great mercy.¹⁴

Wolfgang Beinert is emeritus professor of dogmatic theology and doctrinal history at the University of Regensburg, Germany.

translated by Patricia Harriss CJ

¹³ Available at http://www.katholische-kirche-kassel.de/content/eucharistie_feier_der_gegenwart.php.

¹⁴ Benedict XVI, *Eucharistie—Mitte der Kirche* (Donauwörth: Erich Wewel, 2005), 17.