

Latin? English? What's the fuss?
The Divine Name, *Pro multis* and new Dismissal Formulas

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The Divine Name

(*affecting such Catholic favorite songs as You are Near, Sing a New Song, and Psalm 25: I lift up my Soul*)

Many Catholics were surprised to hear the Holy Father's decree about the divine name of God (Y-HW-H), also called the tetragrammaton (literally, "the four letters"). Impress your friends and neighbors with that one! In short, we are not to pronounce the divine name in the liturgy. As succinctly as possible, I want to sum up the reasons behind this decree.

First, we are referring to the divine name revealed to Moses on Mt. Sinai. Jews and Christians both believe that there is power in a name. When God asked Adam to name the animals, he was giving Adam power over the animals. When Jesus demanded the demon's name in Mk. 5:9, he was gaining power over it in order to expel it. The apostles were able to perform mighty works by the power of Jesus' name (e.g., Lk. 10:17). In the book of Judges 13:18, the angel of the LORD, in response to Manoah's request for his name, responds, "Why do you ask my name, which is mysterious?" The angel is speaking on behalf of God, and so is stating that the divine name is not to be pronounced. Jews will never pronounce the divine name. They always substitute a title in its place, e.g. Adonai or Elohim. This is because for a human being to pronounce the divine name is tantamount to claiming power over God. In St. Paul's great Christological hymn written in his letter to the Philippians 2:6ff, he writes that because Jesus suffered the cross in obedience to the Father, God "bestowed on him the name above every other name...Jesus Christ is LORD." The name bestowed is the divine name. The Father is declaring Jesus to be equal to himself by giving him his own name. Notice that St. Paul uses the title "LORD" as a substitute for the divine name, which he reverently refuses to write, let alone pronounce aloud. Throughout all of Jewish history to this day, the Jews refuse to pronounce the divine name. Throughout all of Christian history, Christians have never pronounced the divine name within the liturgy. It is only in recent decades that certain songs have made bold to use the name, but still today there are no scripture passages and no prayer texts that use the name in the liturgy.

In sum, we do not pronounce the divine name because, 1) theologically, it would claim a power over God which we do not have; 2) throughout all of our history, we have never done so; and 3) out of respect for our Jewish elder brothers in the faith, who consider it blasphemous to do so.

Pro multis

In October 2006, Francis Cardinal Arinze, the prefect for the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, wrote a letter to the presidents of all the bishops' conferences throughout the world. In that letter, he communicated the

instructions of Pope Benedict XVI regarding the translation of the Latin words *pro multis* in the Eucharistic Prayers. In the current translation, the Eucharistic Prayer goes as follows:

“Take this, all of you, and drink from it, for this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and eternal covenant; it will be poured out for you and **for all** for the forgiveness of sins.”

The two words in bold are the words in question. The Pope has slightly emended this to the following:

“Take this, all of you, and drink from it, for this is the chalice of my blood, the blood of the new and eternal covenant; which will be poured out for you and **for many** for the forgiveness of sins.”

Though this will seem quite surprising for many at first, there are strong and sound reasons which the Holy Father has given to support this change.

1) The Synoptic Gospels (Mt 26,28; Mk 14,24) make specific reference to “many” for whom the Lord is offering the Sacrifice, and this wording has been emphasized by some biblical scholars in connection with the words of the prophet Isaiah (53,11-12). It would have been entirely possible in the Gospel texts to have said “for all” (for example, cf. Luke 12,41); instead, the formula given in the institution narrative is “for many,” and the words have been faithfully translated thus in most modern biblical versions.

2) The Roman Rite in Latin has always said *pro multis* (for many) and never *pro omnibus* (for all) in the consecration of the chalice.

3) The anaphoras (Eucharistic Prayers) of the various Oriental Rites, whether in Greek, Syriac, Armenian, the Slavic languages, etc., contain the verbal equivalent of the Latin *pro multis* in their respective languages.

4) “For many” is a faithful translation of *pro multis*, whereas “for all” is rather an explanation of the sort that belongs properly to catechesis.

5) The formula “for all” certainly corresponds to a correct interpretation of the Lord’s intention expressed in the scriptures. Even more, it is a dogma of faith that Christ died on the Cross for all men and women (cf. John 11:52; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Titus 2:11; 1 John 2:2).

6) However, the expression “for many” is scriptural, historical, ecumenical, and has the following solid theological interpretation: “for many” is a reminder that, while salvation is offered to all, all do not accept it. Salvation is not imposed in some kind of mechanical way, against one’s free will or participation. It is freely offered **to all** to accept in faith, and **many** do indeed accept it. Some do not. As for those who reject the gift, the Church

entrusts them to the mercy of God, but they place themselves outside of the Church's liturgical offering.

7) Lastly, in line with the Instruction *Liturgiam authenticam*, translations should be more faithful to the actual prayer of the Church—the Latin text as given, not as interpreted.

Given all of the reasons listed above, the hope of the Church is that when the faithful hear the words over the Chalice “for many,” they will be inspired to make a personal affirmation of their faith in and desire for the gift of salvation freely offered in Christ Jesus to the whole world.

New Dismissal Formulas

On October 17, 2008 Cardinal Arinze published a communication in the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, that the Holy Father, Pope Benedict, had approved three new formulas for the dismissal at the end of Mass. The current formula is "Ite, missa est," (literally, “Go, you are sent forth.”), now translated as "The Mass is ended, go in peace." The new options are:

-- "Ite ad Evangelium Domini annuntiandum" (Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord).

-- "Ite in pace, glorificando vita vestra Dominum" (Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life).

-- "Ite in pace" (Go in peace).

Father Richard B. Hilgartner, associate director of the Secretariat of Divine Worship for the U.S. Bishops' Conference, said in an interview with *Catholic News Service* that, "the Holy Father had a desire to find ways to express more clearly the connection between what's celebrated in the liturgy and how the faithful live their lives beyond liturgy, that movement from the altar to the world."

The Holy Father's action came in response to one of the propositions put forth by the Bishops who attended the World Synod of Bishops in 2005 on the Eucharist. At the end of the month-long discussions, the Synod participants put together a series of propositions which were presented to the Pope. Usually, the Pope then publishes a document that sums up and responds to the work of the Synod. Proposition 24 of the Synod on the Eucharist recommended new acclamations for the Mass dismissal:

To make more explicit the relationship between Eucharist and mission, which belongs to the heart of this Synod, it is suggested that new dismissal formulas be prepared (solemn blessings, prayers over the people or others), which underline the mission in the world of the faithful who have participated in the Eucharist.

The English translation for these formulas was given the “recognition” from Rome along with the Order of the Mass, though they may not yet be used in an English language Mass

until the entire translation is given approval for liturgical use. They are a marvelous pastoral response by the Holy Father. And they are a reminder and clear call to our baptismal duty to be missionaries of the Gospel!