

## La réalisation des « 5 plaies de l’Eglise » dans Vatican II démontrée, citations à l’appui, et clairement explicitée par le Centre Rosmini en Grande-Bretagne.

Les correspondances entre le livre de Rosmini de 1848 et les textes de Vatican II sont données avec précision.

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### THE FIVE WOUNDS OF HOLY CHURCH

1. It is undoubtedly the most famous of Rosmini’s books, written with great passion and love for the Church. It caused him immense personal damage, but he felt that the renewal of the Church was of such great urgency that he had to be prepared to suffer for it. Rosmini borrowed the image of the “crucified Church” from Pope Innocent IV (1243-1254).
2. Rosmini wrote it in 1832, but did not publish it, “THE TIME DID NOT SEEM RIPE”. In 1846, a new Pope was elected, Pius IX “WHO SEEMS DESTINED TO RENEW OUR AGE AND GIVE THE CHURCH THE IMPETUS FOR A NEW, GLORIOUS STAGE OF UNIMAGINABLE DEVELOPMENT”: Rosmini published it in 1848 for a circle of friends “WHO HAVE SHARED MY SORROW, AND NOW LOOK FORWARD WITH ME IN HOPE”. It was issued immediately in other editions, against Rosmini’s wishes, by pirate publishing houses. It had a swift and wide diffusion. There was also an English edition of the book published in London, translated by an Anglican canon. A curious episode is connected with the Rovereto Edition of 1863, when many Bishops and Cardinals had gathered at Trento for the celebrations of the third centenary of the famous Council of Trento. Some people from Rovereto (Rosmini’s birth-place) placed copies of the Five Wounds in the rooms of bishops and Cardinals, but the local priests immediately withdrew the books and made a great bonfire in the courtyard of the Seminary. The people of Rovereto, however, persisted and sent copies of the book to all bishops and Cardinals world-wide at their own addresses.
3. With hind-sight we can say that the publication of the book in 1848 was a great mistake, given the agitated political situation in most of Europe. It was bound to raise fierce opposition from all quarters, but especially from the Austrian Government. Austria, who was occupying most of North Italy, viewed Rosmini as “OUR MOST FORMIDABLE ENEMY” and “THE EVIL GENIE OF PIUS IX” (from a letter of the Austrian Ambassador in Rome, 1849). Rosmini was a subject of the Austrian Empire (Rovereto was under Austria at that time), but he did not hide his strong desire for the independence of Italy as a confederation of free Italian states. Moreover, in the Five Wounds, Rosmini calls for full freedom of the Church in all rightful things, but especially in the appointment of bishops, and in the full ownership of all Church’s properties. Austria, on the contrary, exercised at the time an absolute control over the appointment of bishops in the Austrian Empire, and the clergy and the properties of the Church were dependent on its authority. Rosmini was persecuted all his life by the Austrian authorities.
4. But why were 1848-1849 the worst years for the publication and diffusion of the Five Wounds of holy Church?
5. Rosmini had been sent to Rome as a special envoy of the king of Piedmont, Carlo Alberto, with the task of persuading the Pope to grant a Constitution to his Papal States and to accept to be the head of a Confederation of free Italian States. The Pope, who had Rosmini in the greatest esteem, welcomed him and told him to get ready to be made a Cardinal. Everybody at the curia was sure that Rosmini would have been made the next Secretary of State. Unfortunately, the political situation in Rome deteriorated, with the

assassination of the Prime minister of the Papal States and a popular uprising. Priests and some Cardinals were killed, and the Pope was forced to flee Rome in disguise. He made his way to the kingdom of Naples and he remained at Gaeta for over a year under the protection of the king of Naples and of the Austrian Government. He asked Rosmini to follow him to Gaeta, and initially he relied heavily on Rosmini for advice. Things changed drastically for Rosmini with the arrival of the Austrian ambassador, "WELCOMED LIKE A MESSIAH". The Pope was easily persuaded that the safety and security of the Pope and of the papal States was with the traditional protectors, Austria and Naples and any other Power that opposed movements of independence or of liberalisation. The Pope told Rosmini that he was no longer a "CONSTITUTIONALIST", and that he had abandoned all his liberal views on politics. Moreover, Rosmini found almost impossible to approach the Pope, and the Cardinals, led by Cardinal Antonelli, a staunch supporter of Austria, made sure that Rosmini had no influence on the Pope. And indeed, they used the Five Wounds as a powerful tool against Rosmini.

6. Rosmini was asked by the Pope, under pressure from some of the Cardinals, to clarify his teaching on the following suspected opinions found in the Five Wounds: 1) The divine right of clergy and people in the election of bishops; 2) The use of the vernacular in the Liturgy; 3) Criticism of Scholasticism; 4) The separation of Church and State. Rosmini clarified all points and sent a written paper to the Pope. He sent a second letter, but to no avail: people at the papal court made sure that no letter from Rosmini reached the Pope. Soon afterwards, the police of the kingdom of Naples began harassing Rosmini with the clear intent to have him out of the kingdom and in no position of influencing the Pope.
7. Rosmini left Naples on 15th July 1849. As he was making his way towards Stresa, on 13th August 1849 he received the letter from the Congregation of the Index which stated that on the order of the Pope the Congregation had met (in May-June, when Rosmini was in Naples, but the meetings had been kept secret from him) and had decreed that the book "Of the Five Wounds of Holy Church" had been condemned and placed in the Index of forbidden books. The Pope had approved the decree and was asking for submission. Rosmini submitted at once, "I HAD BEEN KEPT IN THE DARK ABOUT THE MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION AND I WAS NEVER TOLD THE REASONS FOR THE CONDEMNATION. I SENT MY FULL SUBMISSION... SIT NOMEN DOMINI BENEDICTUM". He wrote in his letter of submission: "AS A DEVOTED AND OBEDIENT SON OF THE HOLY SEE, WHICH THROUGH THE GRACE OF GOD I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN IN MY HEART AND PUBLICLY PROFESSED TO BE, I DECLARE THAT I SUBMIT TO THE PROHIBITION OF THIS BOOK, ABSOLUTELY, SIMPLY, AND AS COMPLETELY AS POSSIBLE, BEGGING YOU TO INFORM THE HOLY FATHER AND THE SACRED CONGREGATION". A few days later he wrote to the Master of the Sacred Palace: "I WILL ADD THAT BY THE GRACE OF GOD ALONE, I HAVE NEVER IN MY LIFE HAD A TEMPTATION AGAINST THE FAITH, NOR HAVE I EVER HESITATED A MOMENT TO CONDEMN ANYTHING THAT THE HOLY SEE MIGHT FIND WRONG IN MY WRITINGS OR ELSEWHERE".
8. No official reason for the condemnation was ever given. Rosmini was assured that nothing wrong theologically had been found in the book; his own view was that the book had been condemned because of the pressure of Austria on account of his insistence that the elections of bishops are no matter for the State but for the Church and that clergy and people have a divine right to elect their bishops, with the approval and final say of the Pope.
9. The book was taken out of the Index just a few years before Vatican II. It was widely known to the Bishops who took part in Vatican II, and many of the ideas of the book found their way in the Vatican II Documents. Pope Paul VI called the Five Wounds of Holy Church "A PROPHETIC BOOK". It is the opinion of many that some of the Wounds are still waiting for a cure, and we may need perhaps a Vatican III to tackle more resolutely the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Wounds; and even the First and Second Wounds are still very much open, although the Church of Vatican II has produced important documents towards "healing" them.
10. The Five Wounds of Holy Church is a precious theological book on the Church that Rosmini loved with all his heart. Here are some important points which have been taken up by Vatican II and subsequent Papal Documents:
  - The living union of clergy and laity in the one People of God.
  - The active and intelligent participation of all to the Liturgy
  - Christianity as a "supernatural" reality and mystery.
  - The centrality of Scriptures and of the Sacraments.
  - The return to ancient traditions and to the Fathers of the Church.

- The necessity of a living theology.
- The profound education of the clergy, on Scripture, Fathers, Traditions.
- The collegiality of the bishops with the Pope at the Head of the Collegium.
- The renewed awareness amongst Christians of the Bishop as Father and Shepherd of the local Church.
- The presence and the consent of the People of God (clergy and laity) in the election of their Shepherd, the Bishop.
- The responsibility of the whole People of God for the Church.
- The freedom of the Church from political powers and earthly riches.
- The real poverty of bishop and clergy, chosen as a vocation.
- The work of charity of the Church for the poor to whom the riches of the Church partly belong.

A final historical point on the Five Wounds: Rosmini suffered greatly as a result of the condemnation of the book. His reputation of outstanding Christian philosopher, theologian, and spiritual guide, came under suspicion. Friends deserted him. Some theology schools stopped teaching his theories. The Institute of Charity also suffered. Rosminians were no longer welcomed in some Dioceses, some bishops opposed the opening of new Rosminian houses, the flow of novices nearly came to a full stop. The martyrdom of Rosmini and of his Institute came to an end only in 2002, when the Vatican issued a Declaration, a sort of apology for the treatment of Rosmini!

### **The Five Wounds of the Church and some Documents of Vatican II:**

1st Wound	See CONSTITUTION ON SACRED LITURGY
2nd Wound	See DECREE ON PRIESTLY FORMATION ; see also DECREE ON THE MINISTRY AND LIFE OF PRIESTS.
3rd Wound	See DECREE ON THE BISHOPS' PASTORAL OFFICE IN THE CHURCH. See also LUMEN GENTIUM.
4th Wound	See DECREE ON THE BISHOPS' PASTORAL OFFICE IN THE CHURCH. See also DECLARATION ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
5th Wound	See DECLARATION ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM. See also various Papal Encyclicals on social issues.

## THE FIVE WOUNDS OF HOLY CHURCH

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1. **The division between people and clergy at worship.**
2. **The insufficient education of the clergy.**
3. **Disunion amongst the Bishops.**
4. **The nomination of Bishops in the hands of civil government.**
5. **The enslavement of Church's goods (by the State and by the lack of poverty of the members of the Church).**

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### THE FIRST WOUND

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#### THE WOUND IN THE LEFT HAND OF HOLY CHURCH: THE DIVISION BETWEEN PEOPLE AND CLERGY AT PUBLIC WORSHIP

"ALL THE FAITHFUL, CLERGY AND PEOPLE, REPRESENT AND FORM IN THE CHURCH THE MARVELLOUS UNITY INDICATED BY CHRIST WHEN HE SAID, "WHERE TWO OR THREE ARE GATHERED IN MY NAME, IN AGREEMENT ABOUT *everything* THEY ASK, THERE AM I IN THEIR MIDST".

Rosmini had a very lofty view of the dignity of the laity. The "faithful", for Rosmini, are the **clergy and the laity together**, representing and forming in the Church the marvellous unity indicated by Christ when He said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, in agreement about everything they ask, there I am in their midst". Christ demands unity of minds and hearts, the clergy and the people acting together "as one man" as Scripture says of the ancient Israelites.

Rosmini writes about the dignity of the laity: "THERE ARE ALWAYS HOLY, PRUDENT MEN AND WOMEN WITH THE SENSE OF CHRIST AMONG THEM. THE PEOPLE ARE A PART OF THE MYSTICAL BODY OF CHRIST; TOGETHER WITH THEIR PASTORS AND INCORPORATED WITH THE HEAD, THEY FORM A SINGLE BODY. IN BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION THEY HAVE RECEIVED THE IMPRESSION OF AN INDELIBLE, PRIESTLY CHARACTER... THE ORDINARY CHRISTIAN POSSESSES A MYSTICAL, PRIVATE PRIESTHOOD GIVING HIM/HER SPECIAL DIGNITY AND POWER, AND A FEELING FOR SPIRITUAL THINGS. THE CLERGY HAS ITS RIGHTS, BUT SO HAVE THE CHRISTIAN PEOPLE. FOR EXAMPLE, THE CHRISTIAN PEOPLE CAN AND MUST OPPOSE A BISHOP OPENLY TEACHING HERESY. THEIR SENSE OF THE SUPERNATURAL TEACHES THEM TO DO THIS, AND GIVES THEM THE RIGHT TO DO IT. THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH TAUGHT THAT THE PEOPLE'S PART IN THE CHOICE OF THEIR PASTORS DERIVED FROM THE DIVINE LAW...". Rosmini wrote this in 1832, unique among all Christian writers of the time in stressing the universal participation of all baptised in the mission of Christ, being with Him Priests, Prophets, and Kings.

The early Christians, the Apostles and the believers, were "one in hearts and mind", they acted as one Body. Why? They believed the same truths, they took part fully, body and soul, in their liturgies, the Eucharist and the Sacraments. **Everyone understood what was being said and done.**

**JESUS came to save the whole person, body and spirit.** The Gospel had to appeal to both elements of the human nature, to the mind and to the heart. The Apostles were indeed sent out to "preach", to instruct people. But they did not found a school of philosophy, nor did they perform miracles simply to prove the truth of what they were saying, nor gave examples of great virtues to persuade their listeners. If they had

presented Christianity simply as wisdom, as truths to be believed, they would not have achieved much. Their appeal would have been greatly reduced.

### **What did the Apostles do to save the whole person, intellect and feeling, mind and heart, and to submit the whole world to a cross?**

JESUS' command was, "Go out into the whole world and **make disciples** of all nations, **baptising** them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit". His command was to "speak" to the intellect by the way of preaching, and to regenerate the will, to touch the heart, to speak to feeling by "baptising", by the Sacraments, by the acts of worship of the New Testament. The Sacraments were the mysterious rites and powerful works with which the Apostles reformed the whole world. **"The Sacraments were words and signs of God, creating a new soul, creating new life, new heavens and a new earth. The Apostles added to their preaching Catholic worship, which consists principally in the Sacrifice of Mass, the Sacraments, and the prayers in which these are expressed"**.

The Apostles added prayers, ceremonies, noble rites, but they introduced nothing devoid of meaning. Worship was not a spectacle, people were not to be present to look but the people were in God's temple to be an important element in worship.

The sublime worship of holy Church is thus a single action of clergy and people together.

**"The people - writes Rosmini - should be actors as well as hearers, while in fact they are mostly present at Mass like the columns and statues of the building"**. They should have a profound understanding of the mysteries, prayers, symbols, rites, that make up Catholic worship. "The separation of the laity from the Church at worship through lack of comprehension is the first of those gaping wounds dripping with blood in the mystical Body of Jesus Christ".

Rosmini is keen to reassure those who, through no fault of theirs, simply cannot make sense of what goes on in Church, for the Spirit "HELPS US IN OUR WEAKNESS; FOR WE DO NOT KNOW HOW TO PRAY AS WE OUGHT; BUT THE SPIRIT HIMSELF INTERCEDES FOR US WITH SIGHS TOO DEEP FOR WORDS". The voice of simple, uneducated people, if prompted by the Spirit, penetrates heaven itself. But worship is a common act of clergy and people, and it is together that we approach the throne of grace, it is with as much understanding on our part as it is possible that fervour, appreciation, reverence, and devotion increase. Love grows between clergy and people and amongst the people.

### **What are the reasons for such painful and unhappy division in the Church?**

1. **The first cause of the wall of division is the lack of full, living instruction amongst Christians.** Christ said to "preach" first: the people should receive the truths of the Gospels, being educated in their faith, in the Scriptures, in the traditions, in morality. Then He said, "baptise" them, worship through the Sacraments that are simply powerful realities of what has been taught. The teaching should be completed and made life giving by the participation to Catholic worship. Rosmini approves of Catechisms so long as they are more than simply repetition of formulas, abstract summaries. Faith is a living thing, and the communication of the truth must be coupled with the experience of supernatural power through worship. There cannot be full participation to the Liturgy without solid knowledge of the truths of the faith. This profound insight, which Rosmini drew from the early Church, had been lost for many centuries; the present RCIA courses and all modern approaches to the Catechumenate stress the intimate link between catechesis and worship.
2. **The second reason for the division is that Latin, used in worship, has ceased to be the language of the people.** The understanding of words is essential to grasp the power of the Sacraments, people and clergy cannot pray with one heart and one mind if the words used in prayers are not understood. The demise of Latin as a living language was caused by the invasion of barbarians and other factors, but it is a fact.

Rosmini was asked expressly by the Pope to repudiate the view assigned to him that he was in favour of introducing the vernacular into the liturgy. Rosmini presents various reasons why Latin should be kept and the vernacular should not be introduced:

### **Advantages of keeping the Latin language in worship:**

- Latin reflects the immutability of the faith.
- Latin unites many different Christian peoples in a single rite.
- Latin signifies the unity and greatness of the Church and common brotherhood.
- Latin produces an over-worldly, super-human atmosphere.
- Latin gives the joy to know that people and saints of the past prayed with the same words and expressions as we do.

### **Disadvantages of the vernacular:**

- Too many modern languages, bringing divisions in the Church.
- Modern languages are variable and unstable, bringing constant changes in the words of the liturgy and upsetting the people at worship.
- Modern languages lack the precise terms for lofty theological concepts.

Rosmini thought that priests should make a greater effort to make people understand the liturgy and the words used. He is not for the use of the vernacular, although he would not perhaps have objected to its introduction. He calls for a profound education of priests, so that they, who are meant to be the salt and light of the Christian community, are enabled to foster tirelessly the greatest participation of the laity in the Mass and Sacraments. Unfortunately, Rosmini adds, the insufficient education of the clergy is the second wound of the Church.

It is clear that Rosmini is far from approving the kind of liturgical innovations that have become unfortunately too common in some of our parishes. He believed that little change was needed, he appreciated greatly the liturgy of the Mass that we call "Tridentine". The Wound was not the liturgy as it was, but the fact that both priests and people did not understand what was being done and what was being said. He wanted a "living" liturgy, a liturgy performed by the faithful, clergy and people, with "one mind, one heart".

Rosmini had been ordained a priest in 1821. He wrote in his diary, "FROM THIS HOUR I MUST BE A NEW MAN, LIVE IN HEAVEN WITH HEART AND MIND, CONVERSE ALWAYS WITH CHRIST, DESPISE AND FLEE FROM THE THINGS OF EARTH. I MUST RETURN FROM THE ALTAR A SAINT, AN APOSTLE, A MAN OF GOD". St. John Bosco, who was helped by Rosmini on many occasions, said of him, "I HAVE NEVER SEEN A PRIEST SAY MASS WITH MORE DEVOTION THAN FR. ROSMINI".

### **From the Constitution on Sacred Liturgy of Vatican II:**

"Day by day the liturgy builds up those within the Church into the Lord's holy Temple".  
"Those who received the word were baptised. They continued steadfastly in the teaching of the Apostles and in the communion of the breaking of the bread"  
"Such participation by the Christian people as a "chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation" is their right

and duty by reason of their baptism”

“It would be futile to hope for active participation unless the priests themselves become thoroughly penetrated with the spirit and power of the liturgy”

“Priests are to be helped to understand ever more deeply what it is that they do when they perform sacred rites; they are to be aided to live the liturgical life and to share it with the faithful”.

<http://www.rosminicentre.co.uk/studyfivewounds2.html>

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## THE FIVE WOUNDS OF HOLY CHURCH

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### SECOND WOUND

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#### THE WOUND IN THE RIGHT HAND OF HOLY CHURCH: THE INSUFFICIENT EDUCATION OF THE CLERG

#### “ONLY GREAT MEN CAN FORM GREAT MEN”

1. Preaching and the Liturgy were the two great schools open to the Christian people in the finest period of the history of the Church. The whole person was addressed, by the Word of God and the words of the Liturgy that spoke to the mind, and by the efficacy of the rituals, symbols, actions of the Sacraments and of the Eucharist in particular, that touched the hearts. The preachers of the Word were holy men pouring upon their listeners their own overflowing spiritual abundance.
2. We have a description of the Eucharist as celebrated by the early Church which contains the two fundamental elements, the words and the actions: “ON THE DAY WHICH IS CALLED AFTER THE SUN, ALL WHO ARE IN THE TOWNS AND IN THE COUNTRY GATHER TOGETHER FOR A COMMUNAL CELEBRATION. AND THEN THE MEMOIRS OF THE APOSTLES OR THE WRITINGS OF THE PROPHETS ARE READ, AS LONG AS TIME PERMITS. AFTER THE READER HAS FINISHED HIS TASK, THE ONE PRESIDING GIVES AN ADDRESS, URGENTLY ADMONISHING HIS HEARERS TO PRACTISE THESE BEAUTIFUL TEACHINGS IN THEIR LIVES. THEN ALL STAND UP TOGETHER AND RECITE PRAYERS. WHEN THE PRAYERS ARE CONCLUDED WE EXCHANGE THE KISS. THEN SOMEONE BRINGS BREAD AND A CUP OF WINE MIXED WITH WATER. HE WHO PRESIDES TAKES THEM AND OFFERS PRAISE AND GLORY TO THE FATHER THROUGH THE NAME OF THE SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND FOR A CONSIDERABLE TIME HE GIVES THANKS (IN GREEK EUCHARISTIAN) THAT WE HAVE BEEN JUDGED WORTHY OF THESE GIFTS. WHEN HE HAS CONCLUDED THE PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS, ALL PRESENT GIVE VOICE TO AN ACCLAMATION BY SAYING, AMEN. WHEN HE WHO PRESIDES HAS GIVEN THANKS AND THE PEOPLE HAVE RESPONDED THOSE WHOM WE CALL DEACONS GIVE TO THOSE PRESENT THE “EUCHARISTED” BREAD, WINE AND WATER AND TAKE THEM TO THOSE WHO ARE ABSENT. BESIDES, THOSE WHO ARE WELL-TO-DO GIVE WHATEVER THEY WILL. WHAT IS GATHERED IS DEPOSITED WITH THE ONE PRESIDING, WHO THEREWITH HELPS ORPHANS AND WIDOWS...” (St. Justin, 150AD).
3. Priests came from such fervent Christian communities, who participated fully in the liturgy and who had absorbed the power of the Gospel in their life. This fact helps to explain how some outstanding members of such communities were elevated by common request from a humble lay state to being bishops within a few days: see for example, St. Ambrose, St. Alexander, St. Martin, St. Peter Chrysologus. They were well known members of their Christian community and they all knew their zeal and their fervour at their assemblies.
4. By the same standard, **our own clergy are no better than our faithful. It is the community that generates priests, a great Christian community will generate great priests, a feeble Christian community will generate feeble priests.**
5. Rosmini lamented that the Christian communities of his time had been neglected by the clergy to such a point that liturgies were no longer understood, that knowledge of the Word was minimal, and that the people of God had been reduced to spectators at the celebration of Sacraments, unable to participate because of widespread ignorance. What kind of clergy would emerge from such weak communities? **“The first grade of priesthood is the Christian himself”**: a weak Christian will become a candidate to the priesthood, not understanding the liturgy nor the Word of God, attracted by the privileged or superior status

of the priest in society not by the love of God and of the people; such candidate will become a weak priest, who in turn will lead weaker congregations and instruct new weaker candidates. "HOW CAN WE BEGIN TO INSTRUCT AND FORM IN A TRULY OUTSTANDING, PRIESTLY TRADITION SUCH ILL-PREPARED CANDIDATES? THEY ARE IGNORANT OF BASIC ELEMENTS THAT SHOULD BE PRESUMED PRESENT IN THEM, THEY HAVE NO IDEA OF THE KIND OF KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED OF PRIESTS, NO IDEA OF WHAT THEY ARE ABOUT TO UNDERTAKE AS CANDIDATES FOR THE PRIESTHOOD. THE POVERTY AND MISERY OF IDEAS WHICH FORM THE PREPARATION AND TRAINING OF MODERN ECCLESIASTICS PRODUCES PRIESTS IGNORANT OF THE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN LAITY, OF CHRISTIAN PRIESTHOOD AND OF THE SACRED BOND BETWEEN THEM. MINISTERS WITH PETTY HEARTS AND NARROW MINDS, THEY GROW UP AS PRIESTS AND LEADERS OF CHURCHES, EDUCATING PRIESTS WEAKER AND BASER THAN THEMSELVES".

6. For Rosmini this pitiful situation goes back to the Dark Ages of European history, in effect from the end of the sixth century after Christ. He considers the first sixth centuries as the golden age of the life of the Church; the sustained invasions of barbarians from the North and the East brought about progressively radical changes in many aspects of the life of the Church, including the formation to the priesthood. **This is his historical analysis:**
7. Priests in early Church were taught by the best men the Church possessed. The "seminary" for the early Church was the house of the Bishop. Priests and deacons lived with their bishop in a community of faith and love. They learned from their bishop the love for the Scriptures, the burning zeal for the Church, the care for the poor. Augustine was the educator of a great number of priests, and of bishops who had been staying with him in his house. Similarly Athanasius, Alexander, Sixtus, Jerome, Irenaeus, Pantaenus, Hermas: they educated great priests and bishops, having themselves been educated by other great bishops. **"Only great men can form great men"**, says Rosmini. The Apostles had started the process: Timothy, Titus, Mark, Evodius, Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, all of them bishops of the early Church, had been educated by the Apostles themselves. Irenaeus was in turn educated by Polycarp: "I REMEMBER EVEN THE PLACE WHERE BLESSED POLYCARP SAT WHEN HE PREACHED THE WORD OF GOD. I REMEMBER VIVIDLY THE GRAVITY WITH WHICH HE MOVED FROM PLACE TO PLACE, HIS SANCTITY IN EVERYTHING HE DID, THE DIGNITY OF HIS FEATURES AND BEARING, THE MANY EXHORTATIONS HE PREACHED TO HIS PEOPLE. I CAN ALMOST HEAR THE WAY IN WHICH HE DESCRIBED HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH ST. JOHN AND OTHERS WHO HAD SEEN JESUS". These holy bishops reserved the education of priests to themselves, and educated them through the holiness of their life and the profound knowledge of the Scriptures. Their holy way of life guaranteed both the unity of priests with their bishops, and the teaching of the same doctrines.
8. **This golden era came to an end with the invasions of barbarians that brought chaos and destruction everywhere.** Societies crumbled, and the people gathered for reassurance around their bishops and priests, who became the mediators between the people and their new barbarian rulers. The Church was thus suddenly flooded with worldly honours and riches flowing in of their own accord. The bishops became functionaries of the new states, with great power and wealth, no longer free but subject to their rulers. They became detached from their priests, who also became further divided between higher and lower clergy, competing against each other in the acquisition of riches. Bishops ceased to be loved and followed as Shepherd, they became feared as rulers, distant, surrounded by armies and courtiers. Common life of bishop and priests ceased, and pastoral care was left to the lower clergy, attracted now to the priesthood not by holy men and a holy way of life but by greed and ambition.
9. Rosmini sees the Providence of God guiding events, even when such events caused profound wounds to the Church. As a result of the involvement of bishops and priests in the ruling structures of a society dominated by the cruelty and ignorance of the barbarian rulers, the Christian principles of love of neighbour, of social justice, of the rights of persons, of meekness and concern for the poor and the sick, were slowly absorbed transforming society from within.
10. Not all bishops and priests welcomed the opportunity for power and influence that the political change had brought with it. Rosmini mentions the lament of St. Gregory the Great, who ruled the Church during this period, inconsolable at the sight of the dangers of the new world: "DRESSED AS A BISHOP I HAVE RETURNED TO THE WORLD. MODERN CONDITIONS SUBJECT ME IN MY PASTORAL DUTY TO MORE CARES THAN I EVER HAD IN MY LIFE AS A LAYMAN... THE WAVES OF BUSINESS WHICH FALL UPON ME FROM ALL SIDES, AND THE FLOOD OF FORTUNE WHICH SUBMERGES ME, PROVIDE AMPLE REASON FOR SAYING, I AM COME INTO DEEP WATERS, AND THE FLOOD SWEEPS OVER ME. EARTHLY BUSINESS MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME NOT ONLY TO PREACH ABOUT THE LORD'S MIRACLES, BUT EVEN TO MEDITATE UPON THEM". The irony of the situation was that whereas bishops often relished their new status, power, and wealth, the converted rulers



consecrated their crowns to the Church and their highest glory was to be children and tributaries of the Church. During this period, almost every throne in Europe had a saint as sovereign.

11. Abandoned by their bishops, now more princes and rulers of this world than spiritual leaders, and lacking proper formation, priests reached such level of degradation that fell in the estimation of the people and dedicated themselves to making money in every way, using the holy things at their disposal. Sales of relics, of sacraments, of indulgences became widespread, and vice and ignorance became common.
12. The Council of Trent tried to remedy this appalling situation by devising the foundation of seminaries where candidates to the priesthood could be given appropriate training. Unfortunately, teachers lacked the greatness of the bishops of the early Church: "COMPARE THE TEACHERS – SAYS ROSMINI – IF YOU WANT TO HAVE SOME IDEA OF THE DISCIPLES! ON ONE SIDE YOU HAVE THE BISHOPS OF LONG AGO, OR SOME OF THE MOST FAMOUS MEN IN THE CHURCH; ON THE OTHER, THE YOUNG PROFESSORS IN OUR SEMINARIES. WHAT A CONTRAST!" Teachers of seminaries, says Rosmini, had no experience of life, of parish, of pastoral work. They had erudition but no wisdom; they knew by heart formulas and summaries of doctrine, but they had no real understanding of the great mysteries of the faith.
13. Moreover, the texts used in seminaries were useful for erudition but not for educating priests in a way of life centred on Christ and on his teaching. The texts used are "PETTY, ONE-SIDED WORKS, WITHOUT WARMTH OR ATTRACTION, THE OFFSPRING OF NARROW MINDS", which generate in students a hatred for learning, for life!
14. **Scripture** was the sublime textbook for the early Church, that inspired knowledge and faith at the same time. The Fathers of the Church used Scriptures for all their teaching, all of them nourished themselves and their disciples with the living waters of the Word of God. The greatest commentaries on the Bible originated among these holy men, and indeed all the great works of theology had holy bishops as their authors. The works of **the Fathers** became in turn textbooks for candidates to the priesthood, but after centuries of teaching them, with very little new contributions, even the study of the Fathers became stale and repetitive. The next stage was the introduction of Compendia of doctrines, the Summae, which became the field of **the Scholastics**, after St. Thomas Aquinas. But whereas St. Thomas was immensely profound and solid, his disciples reduced theological learning to arid formulas, abstract definitions which did not speak to the hearts of people. "THEOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE GREW BUT WISDOM DECREASED, AND THE SCHOOLS ACQUIRED THE NARROW, RESTRICTED CHARACTER THAT HELPED FORM THE STUDENTS INTO A CLASS SEPARATE FROM OTHER HUMAN BEINGS". The new **theologians**, says Rosmini, have taken texts further away from educating candidates: "THESE BOOKS WILL BE JUDGED THE MOST MISERABLE, FEEBLE WORKS WRITTEN IN THE EIGHTEEN CENTURIES OF THE CHURCH'S HISTORY. THEY LACK SPIRIT, PRINCIPLES, STYLE AND METHOD". It is not surprising, therefore, that learning theology and living a Christian life have become so disjointed. There is no substance, no nourishment for the soul in such books, and the students can afford to learn definitions without having to question the poor level of morality in their life.
15. How different was the "education" of priests in ancient times: the method, then, was to unite knowledge to virtue, to acquire true wisdom, to study and lead holy lives at the same time, one aspect feeding from the other. The imitation of Christ was being sought, His divine Words and His mighty deeds learned and lived, and love for God, for the Church, for the poor pursued with the same enthusiasm as love for the Scripture and for all true knowledge.
16. In summary, there are **four reasons for the insufficient education of the clergy**:
  - **Candidates to the priesthood come from weak Christian communities;**
  - **Weak, feeble candidates are taught by weak, feeble priests;**
  - **The poverty of textbooks used in training priests;**
  - **Lack of adequate method, disjunction between learning and moral life.**

For Rosmini, the Episcopate is responsible for bringing "healing" to this wound. But the Bishops must take action together, agree on all principles and methods. The Bishops together must be the light on the mountain leading their priests by the example of their common holiness and unity. Unfortunately, this essential unity among bishops is what is lacking. The disunion among the bishop is the most serious wound in the crucified body of the Church.

## From the Decree on Priestly Formation of Vatican II:

“This Sacred Council proclaims the extreme importance of priestly formation”

“A program of priestly formation should be undertaken by the Episcopal conferences”

“The task of fostering vocations devolves on the whole Christian community, which should do so in the first place by living in a full Christian way... Families which are alive with the spirit of faith, love, and reverence serve as a kind of introductory seminary... Parishes rich in vitality foster vocations among their young people”

“Seminary directors and professors should be chosen from among the best... They should create a family which intensifies in each student the joy of his calling. With active and loving concern, the Bishop ought to inspire, and show himself to be a true father in Christ to its students”

“Spiritual formation should be closely linked with doctrinal and pastoral training... They should be taught to look for Christ, to live in constant companionship with the Father, through Jesus Christ His Son, in the Holy Spirit”

“Seminarians should understand very plainly that they are called not to dominion or to honours, but to give themselves over entirely to God’s service and the pastoral ministry”

“The study of sacred Scripture ought to be the soul of all theology”.

<http://www.rosminicentre.co.uk/studyfivewounds3.html>

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## THE FIVE WOUNDS OF HOLY CHURCH

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### THIRD WOUND

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#### THE WOUND IN THE SIDE OF HOLY CHURCH: DISUNION AMONG THE BISHOPS

#### The six golden links

The word “collegiality” has often been heard since Vatican II. What does it mean? It is the doctrine finally hammered out at Vatican II according to which the bishops form a college which, together with its head, the pope, governs the Church. “THE ORDER OF BISHOPS IS THE SUCCESSOR TO THE COLLEGE OF THE APOSTLES IN THEIR ROLE AS TEACHERS AND PASTORS, AND IN IT THE APOSTOLIC COLLEGE IS PERPETUATED. TOGETHER WITH THEIR HEAD, THE SUPREME PONTIFF, AND NEVER APART FROM HIM, THEY HAVE SUPREME AND FULL AUTHORITY OVER THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH” (Lumen Gentium,22). Tensions between the primacy of the pope and the collegiality of bishops have always been very strong. Significantly, Vatican II needed to stress that the bishops are all truly “vicars and legates of Christ” and not “vicars of the Pope”. However, as recently as 1996, retired Archbishop John Quinn complained that the papal curia too often considers itself as superior to the college of bishops and so hinders the development of collegiality. As yet, there are few collegial structures, apart from an Ecumenical Council. The Synod of bishops established by Pope Paul VI simply advises the pope: “It is not a collegial organ of leadership for the universal Church” (Ratzinger).

This union of the bishops among themselves and with the pope in a Collegium is still some way off. Many believe that we need a Vatican III to define precisely how this perfect unity of bishops among themselves and with the pope, in a way that shows their “full authority over the universal Church”, can be accomplished. There is no doubt that immense progress has been made on healing this “wound” since the time of Rosmini: bishops meet more regularly at every level, many of them come to know each other quite well; through national Conferences of bishops common documents are approved and promoted. But do bishops feel that each of them is responsible not only for his own diocese but for the universal Church? Are there structures that allow them to govern together the universal Church, always under the leadership of the Pope? Are they all teaching the same doctrine, the same liturgy, the same ethical code?

Rosmini claims that “collegiality” or the union of all bishops was practised by the bishops and popes of the first six centuries of the Church. It was only when the bishops entered into the political arena that the evil of disunion and conflict plagued the Church right up to his own time. **This is his historical analysis:**

1. JESUS, before His passion and death, begged the Father to form his apostles into a perfect unity. Unity in the divine nature of the blessed Trinity is the source of unity within the Episcopate of the Church.
2. The Apostles guarded jealously their unity and the unity of their churches. Their interior unity was guaranteed by their communion of doctrines and sacraments; their exterior unity by the powerful links among the Apostles and their leader, Peter and later by their successors.
3. Although scattered throughout many nations, bishops were conscious of forming a single body of the highest authority. Their hearts and minds were dominated by this great concept of unity, and they used every possible means to bind themselves together. All maintained exactly the same faith, and love for each other.
4. How was this perfect unity achieved? Rosmini mentions “**six golden links**” that bound bishops together in perfect unity.

- **The bishops knew one another personally.** Titus, Timothy, Polycarp, Ignatius, Irenaeus, John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus were bishops who knew personally many other holy bishops even before they became bishops. It was well known that the house of St. Augustine was the house where many future holy bishops were formed. These great bishops formed other great bishops and kept their profound ties of Christian love and friendship.
- **The bishops, even the most isolated, were in constant correspondence,** although they lacked the means of communication available to us. The letters of bishops were read reverently at public assemblies. The Apostles wrote letters to their churches, other bishops followed their examples: Clement, Ignatius, Soter, Athanasius, John Chrysostom, etc. Particularly moving are the letters written by Ignatius to various churches as he was taken to Rome for his martyrdom (to the Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallians, Romans, Philadelphians, and Smyrneans). In his letter to the church at Rome St. Denis says, “TODAY WE HAVE CELEBRATED THE LORD’S DAY, AND HAVE READ YOUR LETTER. WE SHALL CONTINUE TO READ IT FOR THE SAKE OF OUR INSTRUCTION, AS WE DO WITH THE LETTERS ALREADY SENT TO US BY CLEMENT”. Seven letters of this great bishop of Corinth are extant, written to different churches: to the Romans, the Lacedaemonians, the Athenians, the Nicodemians, the Pontians, the Creteans, the Gnostians
- **The bishops visited one another out of mutual charity, or from zeal for church affairs.** Their devotion embraced the universal church even more than the particular church entrusted to them. They were conscious of being bishops of the Catholic Church, and they realised that one diocese cannot be separated from the entire body of the faithful. Each local Church embodied the totality of the reality which is the Church, but their bishops were aware of the fundamental necessity of being one with the other bishops and with the bishop of Rome.
- **Assemblies and Councils, especially provincial councils, were held frequently.** Bishops of a province sought each other for advice, for clarifying doctrine, for finding common solutions. Bishops would consult regularly with their priests and with the people, giving them an account of their government. People’s assent on all matters was valued so highly that if they rejected a bishop they were not forced to accept him and another suitable person was appointed in his place. St. Cyprian wrote to his priests, “At the beginning of my episcopacy I decided not to make any decision without your advice and the assent of the people”.
- **The metropolitan bishop had authority over the bishops of a province,** while greater sees had several provinces and metropolitans subject to them. This arrangement provided for uniformity in doctrine and in practice and strengthened the bonds among churches and bishops.
- **The overall authority of the Pope which was the foundation rock of the unity of the universal Church.** In all their serious needs bishops and churches of the entire world appealed to him as to a father, judge, teacher, leader, centre and common source. Rome was seen as the great see where sound doctrine and the unity of the Church on earth could be found visibly in the successor of St. Peter. The

pope was the symbol of unity of the universal Church, and bishops made continuous pilgrimages to Rome to pray over the tomb of St. Peter and to report to the Pope.

This golden era of the Church came to end after six centuries. The same destructive force that was responsible for the insufficient education of the clergy was also the cause of the progressive disunion among the bishops: the end of the Roman Empire and the sustained invasions of barbarian kings, with the establishment of the feudal system. In the crumbling of the old systems, the bishops became the intermediaries between the people and the barbarian rulers and they were forced to enter the political arena acquiring in the process power, wealth, and privileges. The "Christianisation" of Europe was the result of the presence and influence of bishops and clergy in public administration, but such involvement brought also evil consequences for the Church. The bishops soon learned to love their new political status, and surrounded themselves with courtiers, armies, and all the externals that they envied in royal princes. They devised protocols, invented titles, built palaces, and generally, distanced themselves both from their lower clergy and from the people. Avarice, hatred, disharmony, lust, licentiousness became widespread among them, having been made subservient to their rulers who guaranteed their position. **"They became slaves of men dressed in soft garments rather than free apostles of a naked Christ"**. The bishops' political involvement and power was the cause of profound disunion among them. Rosmini mentions the efforts of the ambitious bishops of Constantinople, of Ravenna, of the anti-popes, to secure more power for themselves and for their particular political rulers; the birth of "nationalistic" churches ruled by bishops who were more loyal to their kings than to the pope and to the gospel.

The bishops' accumulation of wealth and power was envied not only by the people and the clergy but became soon attractive to the nobility and to the kings many of whom at different stages in history robbed the bishops of all their properties. The response of the bishops was to defend their riches by means of "excommunications", thus making one reality of their wealth and of the Church and often achieving worse results.

Rosmini claims that the catholic faith might have been saved in some nations if the Church had been freed of the wealth that endangered it. "BUT IS IT REALLY POSSIBLE TO FIND AN IMMENSELY WEALTHY CLERGY COURAGEOUS ENOUGH TO IMPOVERISH ITSELF, OR EVEN WITH ENOUGH SENSE TO UNDERSTAND THAT IMPOVERISHING THE CHURCH IS TO SAVE HER?"

The Church longs for freedom not for wealth. Free from all political interference, and free from political involvement and wealth, the Bishops, poor and simple like the Apostles, would once again become a beacon of communion among themselves and ready to pursue with vigour the preaching of the Kingdom of God to all creatures.

But to achieve this political disentanglement the election of bishops must be a matter for the Church exclusively. It cannot be achieved unless the fourth wound of the Church is first healed.

## **From the Lumen Gentium and the Decree on the Bishops of Vatican II**

"In order that the episcopate itself might be one and undivided, Jesus placed Peter over the other Apostles, and instituted in him a permanent and visible source and foundation of unity of faith and fellowship"

"The collegial nature and meaning of the episcopal order found expression in the very ancient practice by which bishops appointed the world over were linked with one another and with the bishop of Rome by the bonds of unity, charity, and peace"

"The Roman Pontiff is the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity of the bishops and of the faithful... Each individual bishop represents his own Church, but all of them together in union with the pope represent the entire Church"

"Bishops are united in a college or body... The Episcopal order is the subject of supreme and full power over

the universal Church. But this power can be exercised only with the consent of the roman pontiff”  
“Bishops should always realise that they are linked one to the other, and should show concern for all the churches”.

“In exercising his office of father and pastor, a bishop should stand in the midst of his people as one who serves. Let him be a good shepherd who knows his sheep and whose sheep know him. Let him be a true father who excels in the spirit of love for all”.

“From the very first centuries of the Church the bishops who were placed over individual churches were deeply influenced by the fellowship of fraternal charity and by zeal for the universal mission entrusted to the apostles. And so they pooled their resources and unified their plans for the common good and that of the individual churches. And so there were established synods, provincial councils.... This sacred Council earnestly desires that the venerable institutions of synods and councils flourish with new vigour”.

<http://www.rosminicentre.co.uk/studyfivewounds4.html>

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## THE FIVE WOUNDS OF HOLY CHURCH

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### FOURTH WOUND

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THE WOUND IN THE RIGHT FOOT OF HOLY CHURCH: THE NOMINATION OF BISHOPS LEFT IN THE HANDS OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

#### **No man can serve two masters**

For over a thousand years, and at the times of Rosmini, emperors, kings, and political rulers in Europe and world-wide had arrogated to themselves by force or had been given by the Church under duress the right to nominate bishops for the sees in their countries. The Pope was simply demanded to or reserved to himself the right to “confirm” their nominations. This is the “wound” Rosmini is highlighting in this chapter, but in presenting it and in giving a most painful historical account of the way a “free” Church became enslaved to civil governments, he also suggests that the Church ought to go back to the practice of the early Church when bishops were elected by the clergy and the people. It was this second issue that fired up people’s and theologians’ thinking right up to our own times, and that became the pretext for the condemnation of the book.

For Rosmini, the clergy and the people had a “divine” right to elect their shepherd. He was asked by the Pope, Pius IX, to clarify this theological point which seemed to declare “invalid” elections of bishops who had been nominated by rulers only, with the approval of the Pope. Other bishops and theologians made the same request, and Rosmini obliged by publishing three letters written to Canon Giuseppe Gatti. He distinguishes between “**divine constitutive right**” and “**divine moral right**”. The right clergy and people have in the elections of bishops is “divine moral right” only and the violation of this right does not cause “invalidity”; the Pope has indeed the authority to by-pass this right of clergy and people if pressed by other serious considerations. Therefore all the elections of bishops nominated by civil powers are indeed “valid” if they have been confirmed by the Pope, as stated by the Council of Trent. The violation of a “divine constitutive right” does instead render “invalid” the action of whatever is being violated, but this is not the case of the divine moral right of clergy and people to elect their bishop.

Rosmini, therefore, claims only a “divine moral right” for the election of bishops by clergy and people. But it is a very serious right indeed, of “divine” origin, and therefore it ought to be exercised unless other very urgent considerations intervene. Rosmini justifies the Popes who permitted the interference of civil governments in the election of bishops on the ground that they believed permission to be “the lesser evil”.

What about today? Most civil governments have, thankfully, surrendered the “privilege” of electing their own bishops, recognising the freedom of the Church in such important matter; we say “most” because we are aware that State interference has not ceased everywhere, see China, Cuba, and States with a totalitarian regime. But, what about the “divine moral right” of clergy and people to elect their bishops?

It is in the news these days in the UK: the people of Northampton have been without a bishop for a long time, and they are waiting for the Pope to make his mind up and decide finally on one name out of the three that have been subjected to him by a restricted number of bishops. The ordinary clergy and the people of God in Northampton have not been consulted: for all they know, their Shepherd may well be some unknown person from a far off part of Britain who may have no knowledge of the persons, of the churches, of the real situation of the people of God in Northampton.

This is a typical example, but the same procedure is being followed in the election of bishops everywhere: **has the time come to acknowledge and to respect in practice the divine moral right of clergy and people to elect their Shepherd?**

Rosmini even **suggested a method** that could be followed in the election of the bishop. Registers should be opened in each parish of the diocese “WHERE THE FAITHFUL WHO SO DESIRED COULD GIVE THEIR OPINION ABOUT THE CHOICE OF BISHOP, INDICATE THE CANONICAL IRREGULARITIES INCURRED BY THOSE WHO MIGHT BE CHOSEN, AND NOMINATE THE PRIEST THEY THINK MOST WORTHY TO BE FUTURE PASTOR OF THE DIOCESE”. Prayers should be said in the diocese for the best outcome. The registers are closed after eight days by the parish priests who would convene “twelve of the older parishioners” and the other priests in the parish to scrutinise the results, to discuss and send them. The clergy then meets at the Cathedral, the various parish priests are heard, then the names of those chosen by the people are made public to the assembled canons and priests. The assembly cast their votes on the priests of their own choice, and if the names deriving from both elections (people, priests) are the same then the assembly progresses to the next stage, otherwise they study the results and try to work out which is the name that has the most votes. If the clergy does not approve any of the top names elected by the people they must give reasons and put forward their own names. The people’s chosen names and the clergy’s, or the name of the one who has been chosen by the majority of both groups are then sent to the Metropolitan bishop who will meet with other provincial bishops “as arbiters”, and they will submit the decision to the Pope as supreme judge. The pope in any case will make the final decision. THE ELECTION OF THE POPE, HOWEVER, IS A DIFFERENT MATTER AND THERE SHOULD BE NO CHANGE. The history of the Church lays bare before our eyes as **Rosmini gives us a harrowing account of the dramatic struggle between Church and State over the right of the election of bishops and abbots.** THE FIRST SIX CENTURIES ARE THE GOLDEN PERIOD OF THE CHURCH: THE CHURCH WAS POOR BUT FREE, AND THE ORIGINAL STRUCTURES SET UP BY THE APOSTLES AND THEIR IMMEDIATE SUCCESSORS WERE FOLLOWED EVERYWHERE, THE BISHOP WAS ELECTED BY CLERGY AND PEOPLE. Rosmini provides plenty of evidence for his assertion, starting with the Church of Rome in the West, the Church of Alexandria in the East, and the influential Churches of Africa.

- St. Clement, pope and martyr, and immediate disciple and successor of St. Peter, wrote in his letter to the church of Corinth: “OUR APOSTLES KNEW THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST THAT THERE WOULD BE DISAGREEMENT ABOUT THE NOMINATION OF FUTURE BISHOPS. BECAUSE OF THIS, THEY HANDED DOWN A RULE FOR FUTURE SUCCESSION: BISHOPS MUST BE OUTSTANDING MEN ELECTED WITH THE CONSENT AND APPROBATION OF THE WHOLE CHURCH”. The Apostolic Constitution, attributed to St. Peter, states, “I, PETER, AS FIRST AMONG YOU, DECLARE THAT THE PERSON TO BE ORDAINED BISHOP IS TO BE WITHOUT FAULT IN ALL THINGS, AND CHOSEN BY ALL THE PEOPLE AS THE MOST WORTHY... THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLED CHRISTIANS MUST ASK THE PRIESTS AND THE PEOPLE IF THIS IS THEIR CHOICE. IF THEY AGREE, HE GOES ON TO ASK IF ALL WITNESS TO THE PERSON’S WORTHINESS FOR SUCH AN OFFICE... WHEN THEY HAVE AGREED FOR THE THIRD TIME, LET THE PERSON BE ELECTED.” St. Clement and his successors remained faithful to this tradition as we can see from the acts of St. Cornelius, Julius, Zosimus, Boniface, Celestine, Leo the Great, Hilarius, Hormisdas, Gregory the Great, Hadrian I, Gregory VII, Urban II, Pascal II

and innumerable others. All these witnesses strongly defended the tradition of the election of bishops by clergy and people.

- What was the Alexandrian tradition about the active presence of the Christian people in the election of bishops? St. Athanasius and Origen spoke diffusely of the same tradition in the election of bishops. Origen writes: "WHEN A BISHOP IS ORDAINED THE PEOPLE MUST BE PRESENT SO THAT ALL MAY KNOW AND BE SURE THAT THE MOST WORTHY, LEARNED, HOLY AND VIRTUOUS PERSON AMONGST THEM HAS BEEN CHOSEN FOR THE PRIESTHOOD IN THE PRESENCE OF ALL. THUS, THERE WILL BE NO REPROACHES LATER, NOR DOUBTS ABOUT THE BISHOP. THE APOSTLES INSISTED ON THIS WHEN SPEAKING ABOUT THE ORDINATION OF BISHOPS". And St. Athanasius, "WHEN THE PEOPLE HAVE GATHERED THE ORDINATION SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PEOPLE AND OF THE CLERGY. THE EMPEROR CONSTANCE – ATHANASIUS LAMENTS – THOUGHT HE WOULD CHANGE THE LAW OF GOD BY VIOLATING THE LORD'S STATUTES HANDED DOWN THROUGH THE APOSTLES. HE SENT BISHOPS BACKED BY THE MILITARY TO UNWILLING PEOPLE GREAT DISTANCES AWAY. HIS ONLY RECOMMENDATION AND NOTIFICATION WERE THREATS AND LETTERS TO THE MAGISTRATES". Athanasius regarded such false bishops as "intruders" and "wolves".
- The churches of Africa testify to the same unbroken tradition. St. Cyprian writes, "WE RECOGNISE THAT CHOOSING A BISHOP IN THE PRESENCE AND SIGHT OF ALL THE PEOPLE, WHEN HIS WORTHINESS AND SUITABILITY ARE SUPPORTED BY PUBLIC WITNESS AND TESTIMONY, COMES DOWN TO US FROM DIVINE AUTHORITY... WHAT WE HOLD TO IN ALL OUR PROVINCES AS THE RIGHTFUL CELEBRATION OF ORDINATION IS TO BE PRESERVED AND HELD AS OF DIVINE AND APOSTOLIC OBSERVANCE. THE PEOPLE FOR WHOM THE NEW LEADER IS ORDAINED, THE BISHOPS OF THE PROVINCES ARE TO GATHER SO THAT THE BISHOP MAY BE CHOSEN IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PEOPLE WHO ARE FULLY CONVERSANT WITH THE LIFE OF INDIVIDUALS AND AWARE OF HOW EACH HAS BEHAVED HIMSELF".

History shows as an undeniable fact that in the greatest Churches founded by the Apostles, in the churches of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, Ephesus, Caesarea, Heraclea, Corinth, Thessalonica, Carthage and others, the people took an active part for many centuries in the ordinary choice of bishops. A bishop without the support and approval of the people was considered an unlawful usurper.

**This tradition remained secure and universal during the first six centuries of the Church.** The invasions of barbarian armies which brought to an end the old Roman Empire caused dramatic changes in the Church especially in her status as a poor but free Mother of all her subjects. The new barbarian rulers favoured the Church with wealth and power while at the same time enslaving her through the bishops who became progressively political princes subjected to the authority of the rulers.

**The battle with secular powers over the choice of bishops lasted many centuries.** The Church defended herself with decrees and canons, and strong statements from many councils. Pope Symmachus, for example, already in 500AD published a Decree in the presence of 218 bishops which declared: "WE CANNOT PERMIT ANY POWER OF DECISION IN THE CHURCH TO THOSE WHOSE DUTY IT IS TO FOLLOW RATHER THAN TO COMMAND", and then goes on to confirm the ancient manner of choosing bishops with the consent of the clergy and people. Gregory the Great wrote in 593, "INFORM CLERGY AND PEOPLE OF THE CITY IMMEDIATELY TO AGREE ABOUT A CHOICE OF BISHOP, AND SEND THE DECREE OF ELECTION SO THAT HE MAY BE ORDAINED WITH OUR CONSENT, ACCORDING TO ANCIENT PRACTICE. ABOVE ALL, BE CAREFUL NOT TO ALLOW ROYAL POWER, OR PATRONAGE FROM HIGHLY PLACED PERSONS, TO HAVE ANY INFLUENCE IN THE ELECTION".

**But all the efforts to safeguard this fundamental principle of freedom for the Church produced little results before determined and powerful kings and princes bent on accumulating all authority and dominion on themselves.** They spoke initially of "royal assent" to the ordination of bishops, then they considered bishops as their subjects and their properties as properties of the king. It happened often that at the death of a bishop the king would not appoint a new bishop for a long period so that he may enrich himself with all the revenues of the dead bishop's properties. It often happened that the king would offer the office of bishop to the highest bidder. And because ordinary priests also shared church

revenues, kings decided that the Church should no longer have the right to ordain even a humble priest without the king's permission.

Freedom of choice in Episcopal elections was almost totally lost by the beginning of the 11th century. Abbot Ingulfus, a contemporary of William the Conqueror, thus describes conditions in England: "FOR YEARS NOW, THERE HAS BEEN NO FREE, CANONICAL ELECTION OF PRELATES; EPISCOPAL AND ABBATIAL OFFICE HAS BEEN CONFERRED AT THE PLEASURE OF THE ROYAL COURT BY INVESTITURE WITH THE RING AND THE PASTORAL STAFF". It is worth reading the sad pages produced by Rosmini as evidence of what he says, particularly the heroic acts of Hincmar, the holy archbishop of Reims, and of Pascal II.

**It was Gregory VII that brought to an end this long, sad period of the history of the Church.** We will not go into the details of Gregory's battles against kings and princes of his time, especially the emperor Henry IV, whom he had barefoot for days in the snowy ground outside his palace at Canossa before admitting him and receiving from him unreserved manifestations and words of sorrow for the damage he had inflicted to the Church by his arrogance in selling Episcopal sees and getting bishops to defy the Pope. In one of Henry IV letters to the Pope, before his act of submission at Canossa, we read, "OUR LORD THE KING COMMANDS YOU TO RESIGN FROM THE APOSTOLIC SEE AND THE PAPACY, WHICH IS HIS, AND CEASE CLUTTERING UP THIS HOLY PLACE"! Rosmini claims that the real struggle between "priesthood" and "empire" was in reality a struggle between corrupt bishops refusing reform and the Church wishing to reform them. Behind every ambitious king in Europe there were many corrupt bishops far more loyal to the crown than to the Church, that constantly advised their kings on how to grab more power from the Church.

**After Gregory's victory over the empire, there followed a relatively calm time for the Church,** during which ancient traditions and disciplines were re-established. But after a century or so, "THE DEVIL FOUND A NEW AND MORE SUBTLE MEANS FOR DISTURBING THE PEACE AND PROSPERITY OF THE CHURCH: UNLIMITED RESERVATIONS". **The Church had triumphed with Gregory VII, therefore she gained in prestige and power. She used the power to concentrate into the hands of the Pope all the right of appointment of bishops and abbots everywhere. This accumulation of power on the papacy generated immense resentment among Christians, and they reacted "with disgust rather than anger" at the sight of the supreme leaders of the Church reserving all privileges to themselves in order to acquire more wealth and authority.**

The bishops gathered at the Council of Basel attacked papal reservations, causing kings and rulers everywhere to demand from the pope acknowledgement of their rights and privileges. **A terrible consequence of this was the surrender, once again, to secular powers of the nominations of bishops.** Resultant treaties forced the relinquishment by the popes of a large part of the freedom of choice of Episcopal appointments. The nomination of bishops was granted to the king; the Holy See simply retained its power to confirm the nomination. **"In effect, the new style of discipline, which still prevails and causes one of the most painful and bitter wounds in the crucified Spouse of Christ, divided the "reservations" between sovereigns and popes".**

This was the situation at the time of Rosmini. He makes a powerful case inviting kings and emperors to give up their ill-gotten privilege to nominate bishops. He reasons with them and argues that it is in their best interest to let the Church of God free to choose her bishops. He lists four fundamental principles in the election of bishops which, he argues, can be properly fulfilled by the Church, never by the State:

- **"The best person available should be chosen as bishop":** who is in the better position to judge the qualities required of a bishop, the Shepherd of his flock, who leads his people in the way of holiness by sound doctrine and moral up-righteousness?
- **"The priest chosen should be known, loved and wanted by those whom he has to govern":** the church's desire to have as father and pastor the priest it feels more at home with is good and reasonable. But if rulers nominate the bishops, the people's wishes are rarely listened to.



- **“The priest chosen as bishop should have been enrolled for a lengthy period amongst the clergy of the diocese he is to govern, and not be sent there as a stranger from a distant country”**: it is in the best interest of the local church that the person who is going to be the father of all is known to all. Rulers follow favouritism and personal interest, not the interest of the people.
- **“Generally speaking, only the moral body or moral person concerned is capable of judging what is best for itself”**: the Church is a spiritual and moral reality, and her interest and mission differ widely from the preoccupations of civil governments. The Church knows what is best for her, and the Christian people know what is in their best interest in matters related to their salvation.

Finally, Rosmini, after giving his full approval to the maxim established by Leo the Great, **“The person governing all should be chosen by all”**, sums up the duties and rights of the people of God in the election of their bishop:

- **To bear witness to the virtue and suitability of the bishop they are to receive**. They have the right to make known defects as Cyprian says, “so that in the people’s presence good and evil may be discerned”.
- **To express their desire and request for the bishop whose virtues they witness to**. The bishops of Alexandria in supporting the election of St. Athanasius maintained that he became bishop when “the entire crowd, together with the whole assembly of the catholic church, united as one body and soul, cried out and shouted for Athanasius as bishop of the church. They publicly begged this of Christ, and beseeched us for it for many days and nights, neither leaving the church nor allowing us to leave it. We ourselves, this city, and the whole of the province are witnesses of the fact”.
- **To refuse a bishop who has been chosen, provided the refusal is the work of the majority or the more reliable part of those belonging to the diocese**. St. Celestine prescribes that “no bishop shall be given to people unwilling to receive him”. This is a kind of **veto recognised by the Church** as a right belonging to Christian people.

### **From the Decree on the Bishops of Vatican II:**

“Bishops of themselves enjoy full and perfect freedom, and independence from any civil authority... Since the apostolic office of bishops was instituted by Christ the Lord and serves a spiritual and supernatural purpose, this most sacred ecumenical Synod declares that the right of nominating and appointing bishops belongs properly, peculiarly, and of itself exclusively to the competent ecclesiastical authority. Therefore, for the purpose of duly protecting the freedom of the Church and of promoting more suitably and efficiently the welfare of the faithful, this most holy Council desires that in future no rights or privileges of election, nomination, presentation, or designation for the office of bishop be any longer granted to civil authorities. Such civil authorities, whose favourable attitude toward the Church this most sacred Synod gratefully acknowledges, are most kindly requested to make a voluntary renunciation of the above-mentioned rights and privileges which they presently enjoy by reason of a treaty or custom”.

<http://www.rosminicentre.co.uk/studyfivewounds5.html>

## THE FIVE WOUNDS OF HOLY CHURCH

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### FIFTH WOUND

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THE WOUND IN THE LEFT FOOT: RESTRICTIONS ON FREE USE BY THE CHURCH OF HER OWN TEMPORALITIES.

#### The early Church was poor but free

The modern reader of the Five Wounds will find this chapter very challenging for the Church. The first “four wounds” are indeed all relevant today, and there is still a long way to go before the “healing” process has been accomplished. But there is greater awareness of the importance of finding efficient remedies, and Vatican II has certainly produced outstanding documents that reflect the serious intent of the Church to reform herself from within.

Even from a cursory reading of the pages of the fifth wound it is clear that Rosmini’s vision of the Church is that of the Spouse of Christ embracing the same poverty of her Bridegroom, who said, “FOXES HAVE HOLES, AND BIRDS OF THE AIR HAVE NESTS; BUT THE SON OF MAN HAS NOWHERE TO LAY HIS HEAD”. Rosmini asks that popes, bishops, and priests embrace evangelical poverty, as it was the case in the early Church. “THE PROFESSION OF POVERTY WAS FOR LONG THE GLORY OF THE PRIESTLY MINISTRY; THE MAJORITY OF MEN CALLED TO THE PRIESTHOOD ABANDONED THEIR POSSESSIONS OR GAVE THEM AWAY TO THE POOR... THE OUTSTRETCHED HANDS OF THE POOR, OF WIDOWS, LEPERS, SLAVES, PILGRIMS AND THE DESTITUTE BECAME VAULTS WHERE THE CHURCH COULD DEPOSIT HER TREASURES WITHOUT FEAR OF THEFT”.

Few people today would readily agree that the official Church is poor. Popes, bishops, priests, religious orders, are not seen as the best examples of poverty, with a few exceptions. The general consensus is that the clergy is at least comfortably off, very often better off, and occasionally rich. This perception may well be inaccurate but is often repeated; and many find unconvincing the defence that being poor today simply means living by the same standards of the majority of the people that are being served. Some argue that Christ and the Apostles chose to live not according to prevailing standards; they chose the poverty of the poor, and their precarious existence. The early Church was poor, but free. **Her evangelical poverty was safeguarded by seven maxims which regulated the acquisition, administration and use of material goods.** Rosmini explains these ancient maxims with a passionate plea that the Church of his time, the Church of our time, may embrace them once again if she is to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

1. **The first requirement was that all offerings to the Church had to be “spontaneous”.** Christ obliged the faithful to maintain those working for the gospel, but He appealed to the faithful’s free acceptance of His gospel, and to their moral response. St. Paul, although acknowledging that he had the moral right “to food and drink” for preaching the gospel, seldom used it preferring to work hard for his food and the food of his own companions. Moreover, the obligation that Christ imposed on the faithful of maintaining the clergy did **not extend beyond the strict needs of the preachers of the gospel**, “REMAIN IN THE SAME HOUSE, EATING AND DRINKING WHAT THEY MAY PROVIDE”. This maxim is stressed by Tertullian at the beginning of the third century, “EACH ONE WHO CAN, PUTS ASIDE SOME MONEY MONTHLY, OR WHEN HE DECIDES. NO ONE IS FORCED; ALL GIVE SPONTANEOUSLY. THESE FUNDS ARE THE INVESTMENTS OF PIETY”. **Spontaneity only ceased when the offerings were enforced by sanctions imposed by the secular arm.** This came about with the advent of “feudalism” in the 8th century. For Rosmini,

“feudalism” was an unmitigated disaster for the Church, the most profound cause of all of the five wounds of the Church. “FEUDALISM – SAYS ROSMINI – EXTINGUISHED THE FREEDOM OF THE CHURCH AND GAVE RISE TO ALL HER AFFLICTIONS”. Barbarian kings considered themselves the owners of everything within their territories, including all Church’s properties. They distributed favours to bishops and expected in return total subjection and loyalty to them. Barbarian rulers considered both people and properties “theirs” by right of conquest. “WE CAN EASILY IMAGINE WHAT OCCURRED WHEN CHURCH PROPERTIES WERE NO LONGER FREE POSSESSIONS OF THE CHURCH, BUT HELD UNDER THE DOMINION OF TEMPORAL RULE. OFFERINGS WERE EXTRACTED BY FORCE, THE ONLY POWER OF COERCION AVAILABLE AND UNDERSTOOD BY THE SECULAR ARM”. The use of force changed the whole nature of the offerings to the clergy. The faithful resented being forced to give, and their attachment and love for their clergy disappeared. The clergy were now guaranteed a constant income which did not depend on the amount of work they were doing. Moreover, all donations to the Church were seen as ultimately the property of the feudal ruler who could take over such donations at will. This “evil seed”, says Rosmini, brought about the confiscations of the goods of monasteries and churches all through the succeeding centuries, including the then recent decree of 2nd November 1789 in which the national assembly in France declared all Church properties to be at the disposition of the State.

2. **The second maxim protecting the Church from corruption was that goods should be possessed, administered and dispensed in common.** Initially the faithful brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles’ feet. Distribution was made to each as any had need. We can only admire the love and union between the believers, and wonder at the common life amongst clergy and faithful. This requirement was preserved for a long time. The bishop, as successor of the Apostles, normally distributed each month what was necessary for the maintenance of the clergy who worked for the gospel in their dioceses. The funds came from church possessions; no one had anything of his own. When Constantine permitted wills to be made in favour of the Church in 321, he laid down, “EVERYBODY IS ENTITLED TO LEAVE THE PROPERTY HE WISHES TO THE HOLY AND CATHOLIC COUNCIL OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH”. The emperor Valentinian made a law forbidding legacies in favour of individual members of the clergy; St. Ambrose and St. Jerome approved of the law. Goods held in common and administered by the wise love of bishops after consultation with their clergy were of great assistance in producing and safeguarding increased union amongst the clergy, and between the clergy and the people. All of this came to an end with feudalism, which involved vassalage, servitude to the ruler, who became the master of all that the bishops owned. The bishop, with his possessions, became an isolated individual, a man like everyone else, a courtier sharing the luxury of court life, perhaps the leader of soldiers. As the bishop became lord or baron on his own behalf and that of his ruler, the Church ceased to be visible in him; he was no longer bishop and leader of his church, and of the people once united with him. “THIS TREMENDOUS, UNNATURAL TRANSFORMATION OF CHURCHMEN IMPRESSED THE MIND OF MEDIEVAL BISHOPS WITH THE IDEA OF THEIR OWN INDIVIDUALITY, AND WEAKENED THE NOTION OF UNITY IN THE EPISCOPAL AND CLERICAL BODY. IT BROKE UP DIOCESES ACCORDING TO STATE AND FEUDAL BOUNDARIES; EVENTUALLY, ALMOST ALL CHURCH PROPERTY CAME TO BE ADMINISTERED AND ENJOYED BY INDIVIDUAL CLERICS”.

3. **The third, precious maxim was that the clergy should use church goods only for the strict needs of their maintenance; the remainder was to be applied to pious works, especially in alms for the poor.** Christ founded the apostolate on poverty, and on abandonment to Providence, He himself was the perfect example. Hence in the finest period of the Church, **entering the ranks of the clergy was equivalent to a profession of evangelical poverty.** The profession of poverty was for long the glory of the priestly ministry; the majority of men called to the priesthood abandoned their possessions or gave them away to the poor. These men never used the wealth of the Church for their own benefit as though it belonged to them, but accepted it in trust for the poor. The bishop, as first amongst the poor and the one responsible for distribution, could rightly take something for himself and the clergy. Rosmini quotes Julian Pomerius, a disciple of St. Augustine, who after praising St. Paulinus and St Hilary who had embraced poverty from a very wealthy background, wrote: “IT IS EASY TO UNDERSTAND HOW HOLY MEN LIKE THESE (WHO HAD RENOUNCED EVERYTHING TO BECOME FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST) WERE PERFECTLY AWARE THAT THE CHURCH’S POSSESSIONS BELONGS TO THE POOR. THEY NEVER USED THIS WEALTH FOR THEIR OWN BENEFIT, BUT ACCEPTED IT IN TRUST FOR THE POOR”. Feudalism brought to an end this blessed period. When bishops and priests became subject to their political masters, the goods entrusted to the Church by the generosity of the faithful “instead of flowing down to the poor, either remained stationary or finished in the rapacious hands of the local lord”, and the poor ceased to be a sacred charge consigned to the care of the churches.

4. **The fourth requirement governing Church goods and safeguarding the integrity of the clergy was that ecclesiastical wealth used for pious, charitable purposes, should also be assigned to fixed, determined works to prevent arbitrariness and self-interest from interfering with the management of the goods.** In the early Church resources were allotted to definite purposes according to a fourfold division: for the support of the bishop, the clergy, the poor, and the upkeep of church buildings and cult. "IT IS CERTAIN – SAYS ROSMINI – THAT THE BEST REMEDY AGAINST THE CORRUPTION ACCOMPANYING RICHES WAS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LAWS AT VARIOUS COUNCILS REGULATING THE PRECISE USES TO WHICH THEY COULD BE APPLIED". The corruption and ruin of many ancient monasteries is to be attributed to the lack of precise purposes to direct the great riches possessed by religious houses. As a result, abbots and other superiors controlling finances spent the income as they pleased. Feudalism destroyed the fourfold fair distribution of the Church possessions, accumulating instead all wealth into the hands of the few and powerful.
5. **The fifth requirement safeguarding the Church from the danger of riches was "a generous spirit, prompt to give, slow to receive".** The great rule fixed in human hearts was Christ's noble words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive". Bishops considered money and administration a burden, to be borne only for motives of charity. St. Ambrose refused legacies and donations if he knew that poor relatives of the donor would suffer as a result. St. Augustine had to defend himself against the accusation, "Bishop Augustine gives with total generosity, but takes nothing". What a glorious accusation, says Rosmini! Augustine said that he would gladly have lived on collections from God's people rather than be burdened with responsibility for finances, which he was ready to cede to the people so that all God's servants and ministers might live by sharing at the altar. But the laypeople refused his offer absolutely. It is truly painful, and damaging to the true interests of the Church, as well as scandalous, if public opinion is generally convinced that the Church's hands are always extended to receive, but never to give. It is sad to find people thinking that what the Church puts in her treasure never leaves it; the result is contempt, envy, the elimination of generosity amongst the faithful, and the suspicion that the Church's wealth goes on accumulating over the centuries irrespective of the needs of the poor.
6. **The sixth requirement compelled the Church to make public the administration of all her possessions.** In the early Church bishops consulted the clergy and the people on all matters, including the use of the wealth of the Church. Moreover, the priests and deacons in charge of the administration had to be approved by the whole church, according to Apostolic tradition. St John Chrysostom was not afraid to give an account of his administration of church income: "**We are ready to inform you of our administration**". The same spirit and practice animated all early bishops. The people who make the offering should also be aware of what is being carried out. Rosmini suggests that the people should be involved from the beginning, from selecting the special works to which funds are to be allocated to receiving a full account of the way money have been handled. Religious orders, who distinguish themselves by the making of a vow of poverty, should be the first to give a thorough account of how funds are invested and used. By making all finances public, the Church would shine before the world, and the temptation of using funds unworthily would be considerably weakened. "AN OBLIGATION TO PRESENT THE FAITHFUL, AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC, WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THEIR ADMINISTRATION WOULD PROVIDE THE STIMULUS NECESSARY FOR AWAKENING MANY DROWSY CONSCIENCES, AND ENSURE THAT CHURCH OFFICES WERE IN THE HANDS OF HONEST, SINCERE, DEVOUT PERSONS".
7. **The seventh and last requirement is that the Church should administer her goods watchfully and carefully.** What the Church owns belongs to God and to the poor, and she has to give a strict account to God of how she has administered God's possessions. It is true, says Rosmini, that through the centuries the voracious rapacity of rulers and States have robbed the Church of so much of her possessions. But, perhaps, much squandering of her wealth has been caused by churchmen who have used it for their own selfish purposes and as though it belonged to them. Rosmini adds, "IF WE CONSIDER WHAT THE CHURCH HAS RECEIVED DURING THE CENTURIES OF HER EXISTENCE, AND HOW MUCH HAS BEEN LOST THROUGH LACK OF SERIOUS, CAREFUL ADMINISTRATION, WE CAN ONLY IMAGINE WHERE THE CHURCH WOULD BE NOW IF HER POSSESSIONS HAD ALWAYS BEEN WISELY ADMINISTERED".

In modern times, the social teaching of the Church has certainly awoken consciences everywhere. From the *Rerum Novarum*, to the *Mater et Magistra*, to the *Pacem in Terris*, to the *Populorum Progressio* the Church has spoken most eloquently in favour of the poor, the oppressed, the economically disadvantaged of the world. Throughout the centuries, the Church has been the strongest defender and a mother to the sick, the marginalised, the rejected. Of all human institutions, is there any that can be compared to the Church in her dedication and commitment to the poor throughout her long history?

And yet, Rosmini's plea that the Church herself needs to make an examination of conscience and assess herself against the seven maxims that helped her in ancient times to live according to the evangelical poverty willed for her by the divine Founder, sounds very true and relevant, today as in his own time. The documents of Vatican II speak about evangelical poverty when they deal with the religious life. For Rosmini, however, evangelical poverty is a characteristic, a quality, a requirement of the whole Church. It is the Church that has to be poor, and the seven maxims should become working guidelines for the whole Church.

### **A few questions arising from the key words of the seven maxims:**

- **Spontaneity:** should the Church accept payments from the State collected from the taxation of citizens? Italian bishops receive from the State salaries for their priests with money raised from taxation of all citizens. The same applies in Germany and Switzerland, and other nations.
- **The Church owes everything in common:** why such a disparity among the clergy? Why such a disparity among the various dioceses of the world? Is individual possession still the norm?
- **The wealth of the Church should cater only for the strict needs of the clergy, for the buildings and cult, all the remaining funds belong to the poor:** are we satisfied that this is the case? Are priests, bishops outstanding in their poverty? Is there a substantial fund in each parish, diocese for the poor?
- **Funds should be allocated to fixed purposes or works:** does it happen in our parishes, in dioceses, the Church worldwide? Are a few individuals responsible for spending the money of everybody? Is there constant consultation of the faithful in all financial matters of the parish, of the diocese?
- **It is more blessed to give than to receive:** are churches accumulating too much, always ready to receive, never prepared to give generously to the poor? Are our churches more "businesses" than the Body of Christ?
- **Public account:** do churches consult the faithful in all financial matters, do they consider the faithful as the owners with the clergy and the poor of all church's properties? Are they given a detailed account of income and expenditure on a regular basis? The same applies to dioceses, religious orders, and to the Vatican.
- **Church possessions are God's possessions:** do churches consider all their properties and financial assets as "God's property"? Are they careful and scrupulous in the way they administer what has been put into their care for the benefit of all?

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### **FINAL THOUGHT:**

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### **"THROUGH HIS WOUNDS WE ARE HEALED"**

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**"INTRA TUA VULNERA ABSCONDE ME"**

The Five Wounds of the Church should not be cause for despair and pessimism. The bleeding wounds of Christ on the cross were not the end of the story. Christ rose from the death, and the marks of those wounds

became the mighty signs of God's infinite love for us and of His redeeming salvation. The water and the precious Blood that came out of the wound on the side became the streams of living water of baptism and the manna from heaven of the Eucharist, indeed through them the Church was generated. The Five Wounds of the Church are a challenge, but we place all our trust in the power of the Blessed Trinity. The third Maxim of Christian perfection enjoins on all baptized to "remain perfectly tranquil with regard to all that happens to the Church of JESUS Christ, in accordance with God's designs, and to follow God's call in working for the Church".