

## Marriage Consent: Part II

By Father Vincent Pereira, JCD

The Church in her legislation has always been cognizant of the sacred nature of marriage as a sacrament. To safeguard the common good of all who are involved in this marriage, the Church has established the appropriate canonical form, that is, the consent expressed in the vows. When this form is appropriately executed by the couple, the validity and specific effects of the marriage take place. [The legality of this canonical form has been explained in part I in our previous issue]. The Church has simplified this juridical consent expressed in the marriage vows while retaining all the essential elements. She has selected a form of consent that comprises “the statement of intentions” and “the declaration of consent” and “the exchange of rings.” Marriage involves two mature adults – a man and a woman – who accept each other for the rest of their lives in the presence of two witnesses and the officiating Church. This signifies the “marriage covenant” as the “marriage contract.”

Since the marriage vows have legal implications, nobody should attempt to rewrite these vows or tamper with them or exclude any part of them: otherwise, it may lead to an invalid marriage. There is a Roman law that indicates: “consent makes marriage.” Marital consent is a mutual juridical act elicited by the couple. In the eyes of the Church, this consent contains all that is necessary to effect a valid sacramental marriage binding on the spouses. This marital consent is a pivotal moment in their lives, an important choice that opens up a new pathway for their interpersonal relationship. Do not take it lightly. Be enthused for the marriage preparation course that opens the prospect of an ever better understanding of this great sacrament.

*This is the second of two articles on marriage consent. Please consult Catholic Ottawa and the archdiocesan website – [CatholicOttawa.ca](http://CatholicOttawa.ca) – for other tribunal articles.*