Matrimony IS A LIFE-LONG COVENANT between a baptized man and a baptized woman reflecting the love between Christ and the Church. This indissoluble union is ordered to the good of the spouses and for the procreation and formation of children. By their love and mutual fidelity, and sacramental graces, the spouses help lead each other to holiness and toward heaven.

KEY WORDS AND ACTIONS:

After receiving the couple's consent, the priest or deacon invites them to publicly declare it: "*Since it is your intention to enter into marriage, join your right hands and declare your consent before God and his Church.*" Formulas may vary, but vows are spoken aloud such as this: "*I [Name], take you, [Name], to be my [wife/husband]. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.*" **Consent** is also symbolized by the couple's exchange of rings: "*Take this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*"

IN THE CATECHISM: *CCC, 1601-1666*

FIND IT IN THE BIBLE:

"*From the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, no human being must separate.*" — MARK 10:6-9

Also: Gen 1:28, 2:18, 24; Mt 19:5-6; Eph 5:21-32

THE GRACES GIVEN:

* Help for perfecting the couple's love and strengthening their indissoluble unity.

* Help to attain holiness in married life and in welcoming and educating children.

* Strength to take up their crosses and follow Christ — to rise again after they have fallen, to forgive one another, and to bear one another's burdens.

* Equip the couple to "be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Eph 5:21; cf. Gal 6:2) and to love one another with supernatural, tender, and fruitful love.

MINISTERS OF THE SACRAMENT: The couple

SIGNS:
- Free consent
- Exchange of vows and rings