

Explanatory note to the King's letter of 25 January 1960.

Although King Umberto II's letter is perfectly clear and exhaustive as to meaning and consequences, it might be worthwhile to highlight one aspect.

Amongst other things, the king writes: «I do not intend, nor do I have the right, to change» the law on marriages in the family. This sentence does not simply lay stress on the sense of «I do not want, and, even if I wanted, I am unable». Actually it carries a much wider and definitive meaning which indicates the king's unwillingness to grant previous consent to a marriage which, in his view, inadequately represents the image of the House, and consequently finds himself in the position of being unable to change the dynastic law which, if broken, inflicts the sanction of loss of dynastic rights. *Obviously this destitution also hits the direct descendents, i.e. any male child of the marriage who, even before birth or conception, is powerless to acquire any rights of the kind.*

Ultimately, in explaining, beyond any possible misunderstanding, the exact significance of the dynastic norm, the force of which being confirmed, he refers to the automatic process of the distinctive mechanism of the sanctions, which in the first place results in the 'immediate' loss, as he puts it, of dynastic rights, and therefore requires no further provision. On the other hand, as the king explains, since the dynastic law refers to a religious, catholic marriage, whether with civil effect, originating in an unbreakable bond, either in the case where the royal consent is granted, or in the case where royal consent is absent, the effects (positive in the first place, negative in the second) are definitive and irrevocable.

It is hardly necessary to point out that a marriage which is solely civil, like Victor Emmanuel's in Las Vegas, constitutes a twofold violation of the family law.

Equally plain, in view of what has been said and expressly stated by the king, is the identity of the successor named by the dynastic law of the House of Savoy, i.e. the king's "nephew", Prince Amedeo of Savoy, Duke of Aosta.