

THE LIFE

Gianna Beretta Molla was born in **Magenta** (near Milan) on October 4, 1922. Her parents, Alberto and Maria De Micheli, had thirteen children, Gianna was the tenth. As a child she was open to faith and Christian values. Her parents taught her that life was a wonderful gift from God. The **example of her parents** led her to rely on God and to become fully aware of the need and effectiveness of prayer.

She was five when she received her First Communion. It was an important moment in Gianna's life. From that moment onward, she frequently took **Holy Communion** which was for her a support and source of light throughout her childhood and youth.

Those years were not easy for Gianna. She changed schools, had health problems, her family moved several times, and her parents died. All this did not shock or upset Gianna very much, her sensitivity and good qualities grew thanks to the support she received from her deep spiritual life.

She was a good student both at high school and university. She lived her faith with generosity among the young women who were part of the "**Azione Cattolica**" (Catholic Action). Gianna also put her faith in action amidst the old and needy through the work of the **St. Vincent de Paul Society**. In 1949 Gianna received a degree in medicine at the University of Pavia. The following year she opened a "doctor's office" in Mesero and continued her studies with a specialization in pediatric medicine at the University of Milan in 1952.

For Gianna, being a **doctor** was not just a profession but a **vocation**. She got more and more involved in Catholic Action. In those years she expressed her **great love for life and God's creation** through music and painting, skiing and mountain climbing.

Gianna prayed and asked for prayers from others to help her to discern her life's vocation, what God had intended for her. At first, she thought she could be a lay missionary in Brazil to help her brother, Father Alberto, a doctor and Capuchin missionary in Grajaù, Brazil. Later on, Gianna felt that God had chosen marriage for her and she followed this choice with her innate enthusiasm. Her wish was "**to form a truly Christian family**".

On September 24, 1955 Gianna and Pietro Molla were married in St Martin's Basilica in Magenta. Gianna **was delighted to be a wife**. In November 1956, her first son Pierluigi was born. Mariolina was born in December 1957 and Laura in July 1959. Gianna **was a happy mother**. Gianna knew how to balance her duties as mother, wife, doctor in Mesero and in Ponte Nuovo (near Magenta) with her great "joie de vivre".

In September 1961 Gianna had been pregnant for two months when she started facing pain and suffering. She was diagnosed with a large fibroma - a benign tumor, in the uterus.

Gianna knew that pregnancy would entail great risks to her life. However **she asked the surgeon to operate to remove fibroma in such a way as to save the life of the baby she was carrying**. She never stopped praying and trusting in God's Providence. The baby's life was saved. Gianna thanked God and spent the following seven months attending to her duties of mother and doctor with great commitment and strength.

When the days of the childbirth were near, always trusting God's Providence, Gianna was ready to give her life to save the baby's life, and she said to her husband Pietro: "**If you have to choose, there should be no doubt: choose - I demand it - the life of the baby. Save him.**"

On April 21, 1962 Gianna Emanuela was born by caesarian section at the hospital in Monza. Immediately after the operation, Gianna's general condition started to worsen. She had a very high fever and terrible abdominal pains caused by septic peritonitis. Despite all human efforts, her conditions worsened. On April 28, 1962, at dawn, she was taken back to the family home in Ponte Nuovo where she died at 8 a.m. She was 39 years old. She was

buried in the cemetery of Mesero. She soon became known for the sanctity of her life and her final gesture of great love.

Gianna was proclaimed **Blessed** by Pope John Paul II **on April 24, 1994**. She was **canonized on May 16, 2004**. **Her feast day is on April 28**, the day of her death.

PRAYER

God, our Father,

we praise You and we bless You
because in Saint Gianna Beretta Molla
You have given and made Known to us
a woman who witnessed the Gospel
as a young person and bride, as a mother and doctor.
We thank You because,
through the gift of her life,
we learn to accept and honour every human being.

Lord Jesus,

You were for her a privileged reference.
She was able to see You in the beauty of nature.
As she questioned her choice of life,
she was searching for You and for the best way to serve You.
Tough her married love, she became a sign
of your love for the Church and for all men and women.
Like You, Good Samaritan, she stopped at the side
of every sick person, of the small and the weak.
Following your example,
she lovingly offered up her life, while giving new life.

Holy Spirit,

source of all perfection,
give also to us wisdom, intelligence and courage
so that, following Saint Gianna's example
and through her intercession,
we may serve every person
in our personal, family and professional life,
and thus grow in love and holiness.

Amen.

With ecclesiastical approval

NOVENA
TO OBTAIN GRACES THROUGH THE INTERCESSION
OF SAINT GIANNA BERETTA MOLLA

God, our Father, You have granted to your Church the gift of Saint Gianna Beretta Molla. In her youth she lovingly sought You and drew other young people to You, involving them through apostolic witness and catholic action, in the care of the sick and the elderly. We thank You for the gift of this young woman, so deeply committed to You. Through her example, give us the grace to dedicate our lives to your service, for the joy of our brothers and sisters.

Glory be...

Jesus, Redeemer of humanity, You called Saint Gianna to become a doctor, a role she lived as a mission for the comfort of bodies and souls. She saw You in all the sick, in the needy and the weak.

We thank You because, through this servant, You revealed yourself to us as «one who serves» and who alleviates the sufferings of all men and women. As we treasure her example may we become generous Christians at the service of our brothers and sisters, especially of those with whom You deign to share your Cross.

Glory be...

God, Sanctifying Spirit, You who love the Church as your bride, You poured into the heart of Saint Gianna a share of your Love so that she could give it to her family, and thus cooperate with You in the wonderful plan of creation, and give life to new children who could know and love You.

We thank You for this model wife and for her encouraging example. Grant our families the serene and Christian presence of mothers committed to transform them into cenacles of faith and love, capable of generous actions and sanctifying service.

Glory be...

O God, creator and lover of the human family, You remained with Saint Gianna when she painfully had to choose between her life and the life of the child she was expecting, a long-awaited gift.

Trusting You alone and aware of your commandment to respect human life, Saint Gianna found the courage to do her duty as a mother and to say «yes» to her baby's life, thus generously giving her own.

Through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Jesus, and after the example of Saint Gianna, inspire all mothers to welcome with love the seeds of a new life. Help us all to have great respect for human life.

Grant us the grace we seek... and the joy to find an inspiration in Saint Gianna who, as a model spouse and mother, after the example of Christ, gave up her life for the life of others. Hail Mary...

With ecclesiastical approval

+ Angelo Mascheroni, Auxiliary Bishop of Milan