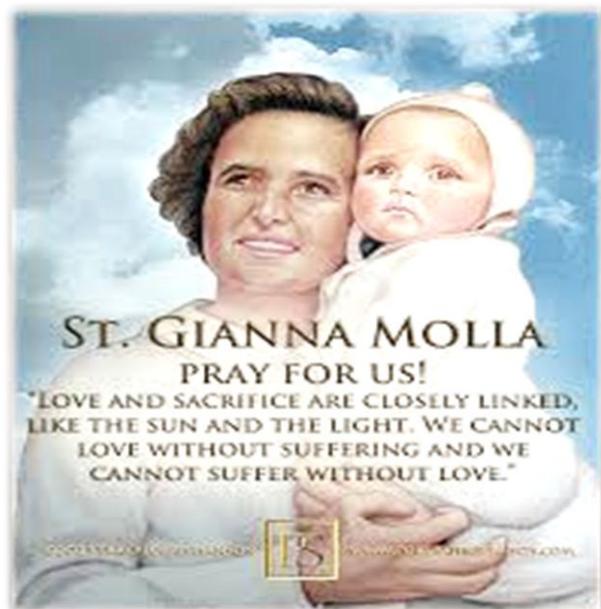


~ Saint Gianna Beretta Molla ~



She was born in Magenta, Italy on October 4, 1922, to Maria de Micheli and Alberto Beretta, both members of the Third Order of Saint Francis. She was born on the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, as the tenth of 13 children.

Her baptism was celebrated at the Basilica di San Martino on October 11th.

One of her siblings was the Servant of God Enrico Beretta. Beretta's uncle was Monsignor Giuseppe Beretta and one relative was Father Giovanni Battista Beretta. Her other siblings were Giuseppe (a priest), Virginia, and Amalia.

When she was three, the Berettas relocated to Bergamo, where she grew up. The Berettas moved to Genoa following her sister Amalia's death in 1937 and sought residence in the Quinto al Mare neighborhood, where she attended school.

She was an active participant in the parish of Saint Peter, and Archbishop Mario Righetti had an active role in her spiritual formation.

From March 16 – 18, 1938, she made the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius, but 1938 to 1939 saw a suspension in her studies when she was ill.

The Berettas returned to Bergamo in October 1941 to live with her maternal grandparents.

In 1942, she began her studies in medicine in Milan. Outside of her schooling, she was active in the Azione Cattolica (Catholic Action) movement. Beretta received a medical diploma on November 30, 1949 from the Pavia college and in 1950, she opened an office in Mesero, close to her hometown, where she specialized in pediatrics.

Beretta hoped to join her brother Giuseppe, a priest in the Brazilian missions, where she intended to offer gynecological services to poor women, but her chronic ill health made this impractical. Instead, she continued her practice. Beginning July 7, 1952, she specialized in pediatrics at the University of Milan.

In December 1954, she met Pietro Molla, an engineer, and the two were married in 1955 at the Basilica di San Martino, in Magenta. The pair visited Saint Peter's Square as part of their honeymoon.

Gianna and Pietro had four children: Pierluigi, Mariolina, Laura, and Gianna.

In 1961, during the second month of her fourth and final pregnancy, Molla developed a fibroma on her uterus. The doctors gave her three choices following an examination: an abortion, a complete hysterectomy, or the removal of the fibroma alone. Molla opted for the removal of the fibroma since she wanted to preserve her child's life.

She told the doctors that her child's life was more important than her own.

On the morning of April 21, 1962, Molla was sent to the hospital where her fourth child, Gianna Emanuela, was delivered via a Caesarean section. But Molla continued to have severe pain and died of septic peritonitis one week after giving birth, on the morning of Easter Saturday, April 28th.

Her husband wrote a biographical account of her life in April 1971 and dedicated it to his children. He often told Gianna Emanuela that her mother's choice was one of conscience as both a loving mother and a doctor.

Molla was proclaimed as a saint of the Roman Catholic Church in Saint Peter's Square on May 16, 2004, by Pope John Paul II.

Molla's husband and their children were present at the canonization. It was the first time that a husband had ever witnessed his wife's canonization.

As of 2017, her daughter Gianna Emanuela is a doctor of geriatrics.

On All Saints Day 2019, Dr. Gianna Emanuela Molla was the featured guest at the University of Mary's Candlelight Gala and granted permission (on behalf of the Molla family) for the university to name its flagship School of Health Sciences after her mother, entrusting the students and faculty to St. Gianna as patroness.