

**Life**

St. Gianna Beretta Molla was born in Milan, Italy in 1922 to a devout family. Her parents belonged to the Third Order Franciscans, and they carefully cultivated their children's spiritual life. The whole family attended mass in the morning and recited the Rosary in the evening. Throughout her life, Gianna maintained the habit of attending Mass and receiving Holy Communion every day without fail. At the age of 12 she began to participate in the Catholic Action movement with her family. She became one of the leaders in college and devoted herself to apostolic work, planning meetings, retreats, outings and other activities for young female believers. Her personality was cheerful and full of joy, and many companions and participants said they rediscovered their faith because of her kind deeds. She originally wanted to become a missionary in consecrated life, but after praying, she realized that she was called to the vocation of marriage. She became a pediatrician in 1949, married Pietro Molla in 1955, and gave birth to three children.

Gianna was a modern and dynamic woman. She liked to dress well and could drive a motorcycle. She never gave up her profession. In 1961, when Gianna was two months pregnant with her fourth child, she developed a fibroma in her uterus. If the uterus, tumor and fetus were removed at the same time, her life could be saved. But she chose to undergo an operation that only removed the tumor, which protects the fetus but was a high-risk operation. She entrusted everything to God. When she was about to give birth, she said to her husband Peter: "If you must decide between me and the child, do not hesitate: choose the child - I insist on it. Save the baby." On April 21, 1962, she gave birth to a daughter, Gianna Emanuela. Then Gianna's health deteriorated, and she passed away seven days later at the age of 39. On May 16, 2004, she was canonized by the Pope. She was the first female saint to have cared for her husband, raised children, and engaged in professional work at the same time. She is the patron of the unborn children, pregnant women and pro-life movements.

**Reflection**

Some people may question St. Gianna's decision. Isn't it more important to take care of three children than to risk protecting a two-month-old fetus? Such an idea was exactly the logic of Caiaphas, who interrogated Jesus, and believed that "it is advantageous for a man to die for the people." (Jn 18:13). The value of life cannot be measured on a scale. Gianna's actions bore witness to her belief that the fetus is already alive, and that every life is a precious creation of God. On the day of her canonization, Pope St. John Paul II called her "a significant messenger of divine love" and pointed out that she followed the example of Christ, "He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end" (Jn 13: 1). She had the courage to give herself totally to God and to others, and was thus able to fulfill herself. Her husband and children had always supported her decision. The daughter whom Gianna sacrificed her life for also became a doctor. Gianna Emanuela, in her speech at the Second World Conference of Families in 1997, said to her mother: "My dear mother, thank you for giving me two lives, when you conceived me and when you allowed me to be born, my life seemed to be your life, the joy of your life and the continuation of your fervent faith." May the deeds of Saint Gianna Beretta Molla provide deeper consideration for pregnant women who face the choice of abortion, and let us better understand the meaning of life because of her.

**Prayer**

Before the operation to remove the tumor, Saint Gianna prayed deeply and said: "With faith and hope I have entrusted myself to the Lord. I trust in God, yes; but now it is up to me to fulfill my duty as a mother. I renew to the Lord the offer of my life. I am ready for everything, to save my baby." Let us learn from St. Gianna's attitude of prayer, whether the Lord gives us what we asked for or not, to have a heart of trust and accept God's plan with peace of mind.

May we learn from St. Gianna to make difficult decisions in life based on Christian values.

We pray especially for the unborn children, pregnant women and pro-life movements.

Saint Gianna Beretta Molla, pray for us.