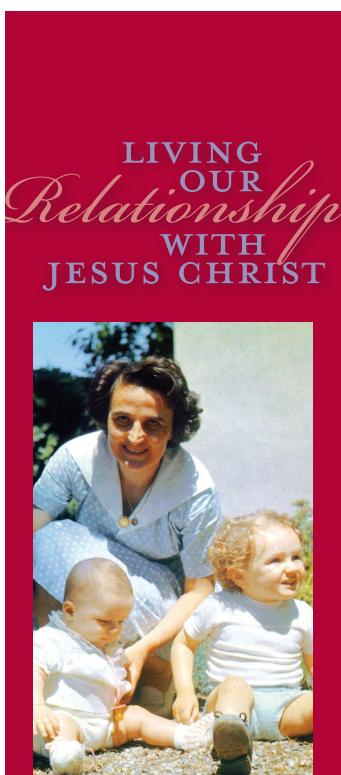




YEAR OF FAITH<sup>2012</sup><sub>2013</sub>



“Our task is to make the truth visible and loveable in ourselves, offering ourselves as an attractive and, if possible heroic example.”

St. Gianna Beretta Molla

# Witnesses of Love

Living signs of Christ's presence in the world

## Saint Gianna Beretta Molla (1922 – 1962)

Jesus stated, “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). The “friend” for whom Gianna Molla laid down her life was her child Gianna Emanuela.

Gianna Beretta was born October 4, 1922, in Milan to a loving Catholic family and learned that practicing the Catholic faith and prayer were very important. As a medical student, she gave service to the St. Vincent de Paul Society and Catholic Action. After receiving her degree in pediatrics, Gianna opened a clinic for children, mothers, and the elderly. She is usually pictured holding a child.

Gianna and Pietro Molla were married in 1955, and she thanked God for the love and happiness that the marriage gave her. Three children followed. Gianna balanced her life as wife, mother, and doctor.

While pregnant with her fourth child, Gianna experienced abdominal pain and a tumor in her womb was discovered. Doctors suggested that a hysterectomy would save her. But Gianna would not agree to this because it would abort the baby. Surgery removed the tumor, and Gianna and the baby made it through the last difficult months of the pregnancy. Gianna told her husband that if during delivery a choice had to be made between her and the baby, he should “choose the child.” On April 21, 1962, she gave birth to a daughter, and on April 28 Gianna died while praying, “Jesus, I love you.” Canonized in 2004, Gianna is the patron saint of mothers, physicians, and unborn children. Her feastday is April 28.

Sister Joela Leinberger, SND

### For Reflection

1. **Gianna was beatified in 1994, during the Year of the Family. Do you have a deceased loved one who is an example of Catholic family life? Talk about this person’s life with your family.**
2. **Do you know someone or have you heard of someone who has sacrificed for others in times of personal grief, pain, or inconvenience? Share their story with your family and others.**
3. **St. Gianna said, “To serve God, I will not go to the movies without being sure that the film is suitable and not scandalous or immoral.” Do you make such decisions? How do you respond when it is suggested to go to such forms of entertainment?**

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