



Blessed Gianna Beretta Molla Canonized

Pope John Paul II recently canonized six new saints, in particular a woman who refused to end her pregnancy despite warnings from doctors that the decision could end her life. Gianna Beretta Molla, an Italian woman died on April 28, 1962 at the age of 39, one week after the birth of her fourth child. Doctors had told her it was dangerous to proceed with the pregnancy because she had a large fibroid tumor in her uterus. Some recommended that she consider abortion, but she insisted on a surgical procedure to remove the benign tumor since it would most likely allow her to carry the pregnancy to term. She later died as a result of an infection acquired after Caesarean section to deliver her child, Gianna Emanuela.

St. Gianna was a pediatrician who obtained a degree in Medicine and Surgery in 1949, and practiced medicine with her brother Fernando Beretta for the next 10 years. She exercised her medical skills only for the glory of God and to help mankind, and there was no ambiguity in the way she viewed human life: “The doctor should not meddle. The right of the child to live is equal to the right of the mother’s life. The doctor cannot decide; it is a sin to kill in the womb.”

In 1954 the future saint in keeping with her views on life went to Lourdes, France with a group of infirm people to assist in their care. St. Gianna considered medical practice a means of serving her Creator; however after prayerful reflection she knew that her vocation was marriage and cooperation with God “to form a truly Christian family.” After returning from Lourdes, she met and later married Pietri Molla. Their union would result in the birth of four children. As wife and mother she entrusted her life and the lives of her husband and children to our Blessed Mother.

At her canonization mass Pope John Paul II related that “the extreme sacrifice she sealed with her life testifies that only those who have the courage to give of themselves totally to God and to others are able to fulfill themselves”.

St. Gianna especially understood that all husbands and wives are called to be “Gift” one for the other. In the words of Pope John Paul II: “Through the example of Gianna Beretta Molla, may our age rediscover the pure, chaste and fruitful beauty of conjugal love, lived as a response to the divine call.”

St. Gianna’s feast day is April 28. Let us all rely upon the intercession of St. Gianna, the protectress of mothers and families as we seek through our bodies to proclaim the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ:

“Our body is a cenacle, a monstrance: through its crystal the world should see God.”

St. Gianna Beretta Molla

If you are interested in learning more about St. Gianna Beretta Molla you may do so by reading Giuliana Pelucchi’s “A Woman’s Life” which is published by Pauline Books & Media and can be obtained through the website: catholicspirit.com.