

WELCOME TO THE PARISH
OF
ST. GIANNA BERETTA MOLLA

**incorporating the churches of
Holy Family and St. Wilfrid**



Gianna Francesca Beretta was born in Magenta in Italy. She was the tenth of thirteen children in her family, only nine of whom survived to adulthood. When she was three, her family moved to Bergamo, and she grew up in the Lombardy region of Italy.

In 1942, Gianna began her study of medicine in Milan. Outside of her schooling, she was active in Azione Cattolica. She received a medical diploma in 1949, and opened an office in Mesero, near her hometown of Magenta, where she specialized in pediatrics.

Gianna hoped to join her brother, a missionary priest in Brazil, where she intended to offer her medical expertise in gynecology to poor women. However, her chronic ill health made this impractical, and she continued her practice in Italy.

In December 1954, Gianna met Pietro Molla, an engineer who worked in her office, ten years older than she. They were officially engaged the following April, and they married in September 1955.

The couple had Pierluigi, born in 1956, Maria Zita, in 1957 and Laura, was born in 1959. Gianna suffered two miscarriages after this.

In 1961, Gianna was once again expecting. During the second month, Gianna developed a fibroma on her uterus. After examination, the doctors gave her three choices: an abortion, which would save her life and allow her to continue to have children; a complete hysterectomy, which would preserve her life, but take the unborn child's life, and prevent further pregnancy; or removal of only the fibroma, with the potential of further complications. Roman Catholic teaching would have allowed her to obtain a hysterectomy, but would forbid an abortion. Wanting to preserve her child's life, she opted for the removal of the fibroma.

After the operation, complications continued throughout her pregnancy. Gianna was quite clear about her wishes, expressing to her family, "This time it will be a difficult delivery, and they may have to save one or the other -- I want them to save my baby."

On April 21, 1962, Good Friday of that year, Gianna went to the hospital, where her fourth child, Gianna Emanuela, was successfully delivered via Caesarean section. However, Gianna continued to have severe pain, and died of septic peritonitis 7 days after the birth.

Gianna was beatified by Pope John Paul II on April 24, 1994, and officially canonized as a saint on May 16, 2004. Gianna's husband Pietro and their last child, Gianna, were present at the canonization ceremony.

The miracle recognized by the Roman Catholic Church to canonize Gianna Molla involved a mother, Elizabeth Comparini, who was 16 weeks pregnant in

2003 and sustained a tear in her placenta that drained her womb of all amniotic fluid. Because a normal term of pregnancy is 40 weeks, Comparini was told by her doctors the baby's chance of survival was "nil."

Through praying to Gianna Molla and asking for her intercession, Comparini delivered by Caesarean a healthy baby despite the lack of amniotic fluid for the remainder of her pregnancy.

In his homily at her canonization Mass, Pope John Paul II called Gianna "a simple, but more than ever, significant messenger of divine love."

**In an age when
marriage, family life,
virtue and holiness are
under assault from
many sides, the life of
Gianna Beretta Molla is
a striking witness of
hope and beauty.**



PRAYER FOR ST. GIANNA

God our Father we praise You and we bless you because in Saint Gianna Beretta Molla you have given us one who witnessed to the Gospel as a young woman, as a wife, as a mother, and as a doctor. We thank you because through the gift of her life we can learn to welcome and honor every human person.



You, Lord Jesus, were for Gianna a splendid example. She learned to recognize you in the beauty of nature. As she was questioning her choice of vocation she went in search of you and the best way to serve you. Through her married love she became a sign of your love for the Church and for humanity. Like you, the Good Samaritan, she cared for everyone who was sick, small or weak. Following your example, out of love she gave herself entirely, generating new life.

Holy Spirit, source of every perfection, give us wisdom, intelligence, and courage so that, following the example of Saint Gianna and through her intercession, we may know how to place ourselves at the service of each person we meet in our personal, family and professional lives, and thus grow in love and holiness.

Amen.

MASS TIMES

Saturday Vigil: 6.30pm at Holy Family (LS12 1HU)

Sunday 9am at St Wilfrid (LS12 5JW)

Sunday 10.30am at Holy Family (LS12 1HU)

Contact details:

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