Celebrate Saint Gianna Beretta Molla

Gianna Beretta Molla (October 4, 1922 – April 28, 1962) was an Italian pediatric physician, a working mother, an avid outdoorswoman, and a loving wife best known for her decision to not abort her child when complications arose during her fourth pregnancy. However, she displayed heroic virtue throughout her life, joining the St. Vincent de Paul Society at the age of twelve, and Catholic Action later in life. She earned her medical degree in 1949 intending to use her skills to help the poor in Brazil, but when poor health prevented that, she opened her own office, focusing especially on helping poor women.

When doctors discovered, early in her fourth pregnancy, that she had a tumor in her uterus, they recommended an abortion or complete hysterectomy, either of which would have killed the child. Instead, she opted to remove the tumor, saying, "If you must decide between me and the child, do not hesitate: choose the child—I insist on it. Save the baby." The baby was delivered safely, but Gianna died of complications a week later. The baby, Gianna Emanuela, grew up to follow in her mother's footsteps by becoming a physician, and was present with her father at her mother's canonization in 2004.

Learn more

The **Society of Gianna Beretta Molla** has an extensive biography of her life at their website; click on the Significant Dates link, then use the left-hand menu to read articles on various events in her life.

American Catholic has a brief article and reflection on **St. Gianna Beretta Molla,** including an audio version.