



## CHURCH OF SAINT MARY

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Dear Parish Family,

May 8, 2011

Happy Mother's Day! Today, we pray in a special way for all mothers - both living and deceased. While the weekend Masses are always offered for the intentions and needs of all of our parishioners; we remember today our mothers, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers whose love has shown us a glimpse of the Divine Love of the Holy Trinity.

This week begins our parishes' Catholic Services Appeal. This year's theme is "People of Hope, United by Faith, Serving with Love." The CSA provides many services that directly affect our parish in the form of youth ministry, lay ministry formation, school and religious education support, retreats, and the formation of future priests and deacons. Your generous support of this program is greatly appreciated. Please help us reach 100% participation in both parishes!

As we continue to honor our Blessed Mother this month, consider taking advantage of the many prayer opportunities offered during the week: the Novena to the Mother of Perpetual Help after the Tuesday evening 8:00 pm Mass at St. Mary; the Rosary before any daily or Sunday Mass at both parishes; the Rosary group at 11:00 am on Wednesdays at Mt. St. Joseph. You may already be praying the Rosary on your own during the day, or perhaps a family Rosary in the evening. If not, you may wish to start. In any case, use this month to increase your devotion to Christ's Mother, and our Mother. Rosaries are available on the tables near the entrances of both churches and are free to a good home.

There are copies of St. Louis de Montfort's Consecration to Jesus through Mary available at St. Mary Parish Office free of charge. This 33-day prayer journey is a wonderful way to deepen your relationship with Our Lord through His Blessed Mother during the month dedicated to the Mother of God.

Please continue to keep each other as well as our parishes in prayer. Especially invoking the powerful intercession of St. Mary as we honor her during the month of May. God bless you!

*Fr. David*

## *The History of Mother's Day in the U.S.A.*

The celebration of Mother's Day dates back to 1872. Julia Ward Howe, author of the words to the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," proposed Mother's Day as a day dedicated to peace.

But it was Ann Jarvis of West Virginia, however, who really pushed for a national day to honor mothers. On the second anniversary of her mother's death, Jarvis asked her mother's church in Grafton, West Virginia, to celebrate a day to honor mothers. Her mother had died on the second Sunday in May. The church obliged and the following year, the city of Philadelphia joined in the celebration. Thanks to a campaign by Jarvis and her supporters, by 1911 almost every state celebrated Mother's Day. In 1914, President Woodrow Wilson made it a national holiday.

Other countries also celebrate Mother's Day, but some on different days. In England, Mothering Sunday is celebrated on the fourth Sunday of Lent.

Some believe that the original intention of this holiday has been lost. According to author Nancy Twigg, at one point Ann Jarvis became so fed up with how commercialized Mother's Day had become that she actually filed a lawsuit to stop one Mother's Day event from taking place.

In the original spirit of Mother's Day and with the example of our Blessed Mother in mind, let us honor our mothers today, and every day of the year - by praying, making a phone call, spending some time in a visit, or by helping out in some way. God bless all mothers!

# A SAINT FOR MOTHERS

If there's one thing I've learned about being a mom, it's that it's not always easy. And that while we relish the tender moments, sometimes it involves making tough choices.

Enter St. Gianna Beretta Molla — pediatrician, wife, mother, saint.

## A Holy and Normal Life

Gianna Beretta was born in Magenta (near Milan) in Italy, on October 4, 1922, the 10th of 13 children born to Alberto and Maria Beretta. Her parents instilled in their children a deep faith. In fact, two of Gianna's brothers became priests and one of her sisters became a nun. And while Gianna was a very pious child and considered a religious vocation, her holiness would be found as a working mom.

Gianna found her life's calling in medicine. She earned degrees in medicine and surgery from the University of Pavia in 1949, and opened a medical clinic in Mesero a year later.

In 1955, Gianna married Peter Molla. They subsequently had three children, Pierluigi, Maria Zita and Laura.

During her pregnancy with her fourth child, however, Gianna's doctors discovered she had a tumor in her uterus. They encouraged her to terminate the pregnancy and undergo a complete hysterectomy. Gianna refused, but did allow surgery to remove the growth — fully aware of the danger that continuing the pregnancy presented.

Prior to the surgery, Gianna told a priest, "I have entrusted myself to the Lord in faith and hope, against the terrible advice of medical science, 'Either mother or child.' I trust in God, yes, but now I must fulfill my duty as a mother. I renew the offer of my life to the Lord. I am ready for everything, provided the life of my child is saved."

In the final weeks of her pregnancy, she reiterated that if a decision had to be made between her and her child's life, they should save the child. On April 21, Gianna gave birth to her fourth child — daughter Gianna Emanuela. Seven days later the mother died of complications from the birth.

## A Real-life Saint

One of the stumbling blocks I have often had with many saints is that they seem so distant. Their lives and circumstances could not be any further from my own. But that's not the case with St. Gianna.

In fact, as I look at photos of St. Gianna with her children, I am reminded of the personal pictures that crowd my home and office. I look at the snapshots of her holding one of her children, their faces pressed close together, and I see myself and my children.

St. Gianna Beretta Molla provides us moms with a great example of how sometimes the path to holiness lies in performing life's ordinary tasks and facing its challenges in an extraordinary way. In short, she gives us hope that even saints can smell like spit-up, have to referee sibling squabbles and try to juggle home life and work. And that sometimes through our own sacrifices, we provide the greatest opportunities for our children. Case in point — her daughter Gianna Emanuela is now a physician herself.

Yes, thanks to St. Gianna Beretta Molla, I have someone I can pray to ... mom to mom.

*From an article by Susan Hines-Brigger*

## St. Gianna Beretta Molla

**October 4, 1922** Born in Magenta, Italy

**1952** Became a pediatric specialist

**December 8, 1954** Met Peter Molla at a friend's first Mass

**April 28, 1962** Died at the age of 39

**May 16, 2004** Canonized by Pope John Paul II



## 'Messenger of Divine Love'

*"Gianna Beretta Molla was a simple, but more than ever, significant messenger of divine love. ... Following the example of Christ, who 'having loved his own...loved them to the end' (John 13:1), this holy mother of a family remained heroically faithful to the commitment she made on the day of her marriage. 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."*

*—homily from the Mass of canonization*