

St. Gianna Novena

Day 1: *For all women facing difficult or challenging pregnancies.* All pregnancies are cause for celebration, as we welcome the gift of new life. Yet pregnancy is also a physical, mental, and spiritual challenge for mothers, and can be made more challenging by health, money, or relationship concerns. St. Gianna Beretta Molla is a powerful patron for pregnant mothers. As a physician, wife, and mother, she knew intimately what it was like to struggle with a challenging medical diagnosis during pregnancy. We ask St. Gianna's prayers for all women who are pregnant during this time, especially those who are particularly vulnerable, that they be supported and strengthened by God and their loved ones. (You can learn more about St. Gianna's life at www.bit.ly/st-gianna.)

Day 2: *For healthcare workers.* St. Gianna became a physician in an era when this was an unusual path for women. She chose a career in medicine because of her deep desire to serve the most vulnerable—the poor, the elderly, mothers, and young children. Every day, healthcare professionals like St. Gianna are tasked with the great responsibility of caring for the gift of human life, in all its fragility and vulnerability. Today, we pray for healthcare workers, that they may be guided by the Holy Spirit to faithfully provide life-affirming care for all entrusted to them.

Day 3: *For healthy, supportive marriages.* A mutually supportive marriage is a priceless treasure. Like all treasures, a thriving marriage must be cared for and protected. St. Gianna did not meet her husband Pietro until she was 32 and he was 45, but they enjoyed a deeply loving marriage that they cherished as their highest priority after their faith. A truly loving, selfless, and Christ-centered marriage is God's design, and is especially important for pregnant and vulnerable mothers in need. Today, we pray that all marriages may be healed, protected, and strengthened.

Day 4: *For family life.* Many families are doing their best to balance work, child-care, and other duties, often in an atmosphere of insecurity. Many families suffer great economic strain, and have trouble paying for food and shelter. God designed families to be our greatest sources of human love and support. We pray that all families may have their material needs met, and that they may receive spiritual graces to grow in love and support for each other.

Day 5: *For service organizations.* St. Gianna was a devoted member of The Society of St. Vincent de Paul and Catholic Action. Her husband, Pietro Molla, said that membership in these organizations was formative to Gianna, and encouraged her great generosity of spirit. Many service organizations struggle with uncertain income, as well as lack of staff and volunteers. Yet, the needs of the communities they serve do not disappear, but often only increase. Today, we pray that service organizations providing life-giving support to families may be guided by the Holy Spirit in their work and sustained in their efforts of service.

Day 6: *For the faithful to be inspired to service.* The Christian ideal is not to live entirely independently, but to help one another. Service can take the form of material gifts to food banks and pregnancy care centers—taking time to clean out our pantries and closets—or through the gift of time and presence, like a phone call to a lonely friend or neighbor. Many women who are

pregnant would appreciate help with running necessary errands. Ideas for volunteering and organizations in need of assistance can be found through an online search or by reaching out to your parish or diocese. Pray about how you may be an instrument of God's peace and love. We are Jesus's hands and feet!

Day 7: *For families facing a difficult or challenging diagnosis.* St. Gianna was one of thirteen children. When she was a child, she lost three of her siblings during the Spanish influenza epidemic that raged worldwide in the years following World War I. St. Gianna and her family knew intimately what it was like to accompany loved ones through serious illness. We ask her prayers for all families whose members are ill, that may be filled with God's peace and strength.

Day 8: *For the sick.* As a physician, and as someone who, herself, faced a life-altering diagnosis, St. Gianna is a powerful patron for the sick. Through her own illness, St. Gianna held fast to her faith amidst her fears. We ask for her prayers, that the sick may experience healing according to God's will and be sustained by His peace.

Day 9: *For all mothers.* St. Gianna's sacrifice of risking her life for the health of her unborn child has inspired, and, in some cases, confounded those who hear her story. Yet almost all can agree that it was an extraordinary act of love. St. Gianna's husband, Pietro, maintained that Gianna did not sacrifice her life from a desire to attain heaven, but simply "because she was a mother." All mothers are capable of extraordinary acts of self-giving love, although these acts may take different forms. Mothers deserve our gratitude for the sacrifices they make in order to give and to sustain life. Today, we pray with thankfulness for all mothers.

Prayers for Each Day

O Blessed Mother, you received the good news of the incarnation of Christ, your Son, with faith and trust. Grant your protection to all pregnant mothers facing difficulties.

Guide us as we strive to make our parish communities places of welcome and assistance for mothers in need. Help us become instruments of God's love and compassion.

Mary, Mother of the Church, graciously help us build a culture of life and a civilization of love, together with all people of good will, to the praise and glory of God, the Creator and lover of life. Amen.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be)