

## House of Belisch

St. Augustine & St. Gianna Molla



### Fr. Carl Louis Belisch



- General biography:
  - Born in Houston, TX on December 24, 1935.
  - Nicknames were “Uncle Fester” and “Snoop”.
  - Graduate of STH Class of 1954.
  - He was ordained to priesthood in Houston at St. Anne’s on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 1965.
  - Served at STH more than 45 years, teaching over 5,000 students!
  - Beloved Theology, English, and Latin teacher.
- Interesting stories/information:
  - Humble and humorous and infectiously joyful and gentle and kind.
    - Known for remembering all of his students’ names even ones he taught decades before.

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- He could recall many specific students and the exact classes he taught them and when they graduated and he seemed to have a story for every student.
- Remarkable memory given he had over 5,000 students!
- Rapping:
  - During Round-Up Season, he became famous for reading out raps from famous rapper Snoop Dawg.
- Pranks:
  - Because of his sense of humor and good nature, students liked to play pranks on him and he always received them with cheer.
  - 1985 Time Magazine Cover:
    - His students in 1985 honored him with a fake news story and fake Time Magazine cover article for “Basilian of the Year” award.
    - They published this fake magazine and distributed it throughout the whole school.
- Humility:
  - He had a bad falling accident in the middle of the night and lay bleeding on the bathroom floor but wouldn’t pull the emergency help cord because he didn’t want to disturb the sleeping nurses. So he laid there until the next morning, praying his rosary.
- The Rosary:
  - He was constantly seen walking the halls praying with a large wooden rosary.
  - He would also slowly make his way down the rows of his class praying the rosary while his students took tests.
- Phrases:
  - Known for a variety phrases:
    - “Great loving Scott!”
    - “For Pete’s sake!”
- English classes:
  - He had a passionate love for Shakespeare and was famous for quoting Shakespeare off-hand.
    - He was also known for tearing up when he taught the St. Crispin Day soliloquy from Henry V.
- Latin classes:
  - Inspired large numbers of students to take his Latin class.
  - Was known for his various songs and chants he used to help the students learn.
  - “Bowling with Fr. Belisch” was one of the most popular club activities.
    - It raised money for the Latin club each year with students paying \$5 to go bowling with Fr. Belisch.
  - The STH Latin students routinely posted award winning results on the National Latin Exam.

St. Augustine



“Right is right even if no one  
is doing it; wrong is wrong  
even if everyone is doing it.”

St. Augustine

Summary of Life:

He was born to a wealthy Roman noble family in North Africa on November 13th, 354. His father was potentially abusive and a pagan and mother, Monica, was a devout Christian and an eventual saint in her own right. He was an extremely talented student and became an accomplished rhetorician, getting paid by politicians to deliver convincing public speeches. He even worked for the Roman government including the Empress. But he was also a typical “party boy”, drinking to excess and developing illicit relationships with women. He bore a child out of wedlock, a son, but abandoned his son’s mother who soon after died of illness. Meanwhile, this entire time his mother

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Monica prayed and sacrificed continuously for her son that he might see the error of his ways and convert his life. It was said of her, “[The Lord’s] ears were open to the cry of her heart.” But it would still be a while before change would be seen in Augustine. He sent his son away and continued his lifestyle until he joined an elite religious cult that was trendy fad at the time called the Manichees. He vigorously debated against Christians and saw his reputation grow among powerful people. However, under the influence of St. Ambrose and through the never ceasing prayer of his faithful mother, St. Monica, he eventually reformed his life and embraced Christianity. The moment of metanoia, or conversion came when He was sitting in a garden after hitting rock bottom in his, and heard a voice tell him, “Tolle lege”, meaning take up and read. He immediately to took up and read Scripture, opening randomly to this passage: “Not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual excess and lust, not in quarreling and jealousy. Rather, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh” (Romans 13: 13-14). This changed his life and he finally gave his life over to the Lord. He realized that “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.” He became one of the greatest Bishops and theologians in the history of the Church, writing countless works and sermons. His famous *Confessions* is a continuous bestseller and is considered the first work of introspective psychology in history and the first autobiography. His many quotes include: “This is the very perfection of a man, to find out his own imperfections”, “Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you”, “He who created us without our help will not save us without our consent”, and “Something that is wrong is still wrong even if everyone is doing it, something that is right is still right even if no one is doing it.”

### Outline of Life:

- Born in North Africa in the Roman Empire on November 13th, 354 and died on August 28th, 430.
- Feast Day: August 28th.
- Notable Information:
  - Born to a Roman noble family.
  - Father was pagan and mother was a Christian.
  - He was an extremely talented student and became an accomplished rhetorician.
  - He was also a “party boy”, drinking to excess and developing illicit relationships.
  - He bore a child out of wedlock, a son, but abandoned the mother of his son.
  - He joined a elite religious cult called the Manichees.
  - Under the influence of St. Ambrose and through the never ceasing prayer of his faithful mother, St. Monica, he eventually reformed his life and embraced Christianity.
  - He was sitting in a garden after hitting rock bottom, and heard a voice tell him to take up and read Scripture: “Not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual excess and lust, not in quarreling and jealousy. Rather, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh.”-Romans 13: 13-14
  - He became one of the greatest Bishops and theologians in the history of the Church.
  - His *Confessions* is considered the first work of psychology in history and the first strict autobiography.
  - He is a Doctor of the Church.

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- Quotes:
  - “This is the very perfection of a man, to find out his own imperfections.”
  - “Will is to grace as the horse is to the rider.”
  - “Since love grows within you, so beauty grows. For love is the beauty of the soul.”
  - “Law exists so that we might seek grace, grace exists so that we might follow the law.”
  - “It was pride that changed angels into devils; it is humility that makes men as angels.”
  - “Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this faith is to see what you believe.”
  - “God judged it better to bring good out of evil than to suffer no evil to exist.”
  - “Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you.”
  - “God loves each of us as if there were only one of us.”
  - “Complete abstinence is easier than perfect moderation.”
  - “Men go abroad to wonder at the heights of mountains, at the huge waves of the sea, at the long courses of the rivers, at the vast compass of the ocean, at the circular motions of the stars, and they pass by themselves without wondering.”
  - “The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only a page.”
  - “Something that is wrong is still wrong even if everyone is doing it, something that is right is still right even if no one is doing it.”
  - “It seems to me that an unjust law is no law at all.”
  - “He who created us without our help will not save us without our consent.”

St. Gianna Molla



She was born on October 4th, 1922 in Italy as the 10th of 13 children. In less than 40 years she became an accomplished scholar, physician, devoted wife, and mother of six children. She was prepared for a life of service as her parents were Third Order Franciscans and she was an active member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, helping the poor and orphans as well as a leader in the Catholic Action movement, a Catholic social movement seeking justice and social and political structures reflecting Catholic teaching; the organization had previous saintly members including Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati. Her family moved around Italy several times throughout her early life including to Genoa after the death of one of her sisters in 1937 but Gianna had a close knit family. Her hobbies included skiing and mountain climbing. Her experience with her family and in serving the poor inspired her to become a doctor. In 1942 she began her studies in medicine in Milan. She later received a medical diploma on 30 November 1949 from the Pavia college becoming one of the few female physicians in Italy.

She opened an office close to her hometown where she specialized in pediatrics in 1950. She hoped to join her brother – a priest in the Brazilian missions – where she intended to offer gynecological services to poor women. However, her chronic ill health made this an impractical dream but was content with continuing her practice. In December 1954 she met Pietro Molla – an

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engineer – and the two became engaged the following 11 April. She remarked: “Love is the most beautiful sentiment that the Lord has put into the soul of men and women.” A collection of her love letters to her husband showed an incredibly beautiful understanding of the vocation of marriage. The pair later married on 24 September 1955 at the Basilica di San Martino in Magenta. Gianna subsequently gave birth to three children. Following these, she suffered two miscarriages. Then in 1961, during pregnancy, doctors discovered a large tumor in her uterus next to the baby. She was given three options: an abortion, a hysterectomy which would also cause the death of the child, or the removal of tumor and saving the baby but the removal could lead to life threatening complications for Gianna later; the Catholic ethical principle of Double Effect would allow her to undergo the hysterectomy since the intention would not be to kill the child but would be an unintentional consequence of the procedure. She opted to save the child’s life and to have the tumor removed despite the risks to her own life. She said, “If you must decide between me and the child, do not hesitate: choose the child—I insist on it. Save the baby.” On the morning of 21 April 1962 Gianna Emanuela was born. Despite all efforts and treatments to save both of them, Gianna died a week later. She had given the ultimate sacrifice of a mother--giving her life for her child. A couple of her quotes puts these events into perspective. She said, “The secret of happiness is to live moment by moment and to thank God for all that He, in His goodness, sends to us day after day” and “Look at the mothers who truly love their children: how many sacrifices they make for them. They are ready for everything, even to give their own blood so that their babies grow up good, healthy and strong.” Her daughter Gianna Emanuela, became a physician like her mom. Gianna Molla was canonized by Pope St. John Paul II in 2004.

### Outline of Life:

- Born on October 4th, 1922 in Magenta, Italy, the 10th of 13 children of Alberto and Maria Beretta and died April 28th, 1962.
- Feast Day: April 28th.
- Notable Information:
  - Her parents were Third Order Franciscans.
  - Her family moved around Italy several times throughout her early life including to Genoa after the death of one of her sisters in 1937.
  - She was an active participant in parish life in the parish of Saint Peter and Archbishop Mario Righetti had an active role in her spiritual formation until the Berettas returned to Bergamo in October 1941 to live with her maternal grandparents at San Vigilio.
  - From 16 to 18 March 1938 she made the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius.
  - She was an active member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, helping the poor and orphans.
  - She was a leader in the Catholic Action movement, a Catholic social movement seeking justice and social and political structures reflecting Catholic teaching; the organization had previous saintly members including Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati
  - Gianna’s hobbies included skiing and mountain climbing.
  - Her experience with her family and in serving the poor inspired her to become a doctor.
  - In 1942 she began her studies in medicine in Milan.

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- She later received a medical diploma on 30 November 1949 from the Pavia college becoming one of the few female physicians in Italy.
- She opened an office in Mesero close to her hometown where she specialized in pediatrics in 1950.
- Beretta hoped to join her brother – a priest in the Brazilian missions – where she intended to offer gynecological services to poor women.
- However her chronic ill health made this an impractical dream but was content with continuing her practice.
- From 7 July 1952 she began to specialize in pediatrics at the Milanese college.
- In December 1954 she met Pietro Molla – an engineer – and the two became engaged the following 11 April.
- She remarked: “Love is the most beautiful sentiment that the Lord has put into the soul of men and women.”
- A collection of her love letters to her husband showed an incredibly beautiful understanding of the vocation of marriage.
- The pair later married on 24 September 1955 at the Basilica di San Martino in Magenta.
- Gianna subsequently gave birth to three children.
- Following these, she suffered two miscarriages.
- Then in 1961, during pregnancy, doctors discovered a large tumor in her uterus next to the baby.
- She was given three options:
  - An abortion.
  - A hysterectomy which would also cause the death of the child.
  - Removal of tumor and saving the baby but the removal could lead to life threatening complications for Gianna later.
- The Catholic ethical principle of Double Effect would allow her to undergo the hysterectomy since the intention would not be to kill the child but would be an unintentional consequence of the procedure.
- She opted to save the child’s life and to have the tumor removed despite the risks to her own life.
- She said, “If you must decide between me and the child, do not hesitate: choose the child—I insist on it. Save the baby.”
- On the morning of 21 April 1962 Gianna Emanuela was born.
- Despite all efforts and treatments to save both of them, Gianna died a week later.
- She had given the ultimate sacrifice of a mother--giving her life for her child.
- Her daughter , Gianna Emanuela, became a physician like her mom.
- Gianna Molla was canonized by Pope St. John Paul II in 2004.
- Quotes:
  - “Love and sacrifice are closely linked, like the sun and the light. We cannot love without suffering and we cannot suffer without love.”
  - “The secret of happiness is to live moment by moment and to thank God for all that He, in His goodness, sends to us day after day.”
  - “One earns Paradise with one’s daily task.”



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- “In order to bring true peace back to my soul, the only way that there exists on the Earth is Confession, because Jesus awaits me with His immense heart.”
- “Our body is a cenacle, a monstrance: through its crystal the world should see God.”
- "Look at the mothers who truly love their children: how many sacrifices they make for them. They are ready for everything, even to give their own blood so that their babies grow up good, healthy and strong".
- "If one were to consider how much Jesus has suffered, one would not commit the smallest sin".
- "When one does one's own duty, one must not be concerned, because God's help will not be lacking".