

Saint GIANNA MOLLA

October 4, 1922–April 28, 1962

Feast Day: April 28

Patron Saint of: Mothers, physicians, and unborn children



QUOTE

If you must decide between me and the child, do not hesitate: choose the child? I insist on it. Save the baby



QUOTES

"Love and sacrifice are closely linked, like the sun and the light. We cannot love without suffering and we cannot suffer without love"

"Whatever God wants"

"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"

FACTS

- Born in Italy in 1922, the 10th of 13 children in her family
- As a young girl, Gianna openly accepted her faith and the Catholic-Christian education provided to her from her loving parents. She grew up viewing life as God's beautiful gift and found the greatest necessity and effectiveness in prayer
- In 1942, Gianna began her study of medicine in Milan. She was a diligent and hardworking student, both at the university and in her faith
- A member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, Gianna applied her faith in an apostolic service for the elderly and needy
- In 1952, Gianna specialized in pediatrics and was especially drawn toward mothers, babies, the elderly and the poor. Gianna considered the field of medicine to be her mission, and treated it as such. She increased her generous service to Catholic Action, a movement of lay Catholics dedicated to living and spreading the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church in the broader culture. The Catholic Action movement is still at work today, throughout the world
- In 1961, Gianna became pregnant with her 4th child. When, in her 2nd month of pregnancy, Gianna was struck with an unimaginable pain. Her doctors discovered she had developed a uterine fibroma, meaning she was carrying both a baby and a tumor
- Her doctors gave her 3 choices: an abortion, which would save her life, but take the life of her child; a complete hysterectomy, which would preserve her life, but take the child's life, and prevent further pregnancy; or removal of only the fibroma, with the potential of further complications, which could save the life of her baby. She decided to go with the 3rd choice, willing to give her own life for her child
- On April 21, 1962, Gianna Emanuela Molla successfully delivered by Caesarean section
- The doctors tried many different treatments and procedures to ensure both lives would be saved. However, on April 28, 1962, a week after the baby was born, Gianna passed away from septic peritonitis
- During Gianna's canonization ceremony, John Paul II described her as, "a simple, but more than ever, significant messenger of divine love."

Saint HYACINTH OF MARISCOTTI

March 16, 1585–January 30, 1640

Feast Day: January 30

Patron Saint of: Viterbo, Italy



QUOTE

The sort of people who most appeal to me are those who are despised, who are devoid of selflove and who have little sensible consolation. The cross, to suffer, to persevere bravely in spite of the lack of all sweetness and relish in prayer. This is the true sign of the spirit of God.



QUOTE

The Holy Eucharist is a fire that purifies and consumes all our miseries and imperfections.

FACTS

- From a wealthy family
 - Her father was a Count & her mother was a descendant of a princely Roman family
- Spent most of her youth wanting to get married - particularly to a nobleman
- Fell in love with a man who ended up marrying her sister instead
- Not long after her sister's wedding, Hyacinth became a nun at the local monastery. It was later revealed that she became a nun to preserve her life of luxury & to hide her jealousy
- For 10 years, with the help of her family's money, Hyacinth wore fine linen habits, kept a secret stock of food, & lived in conflict with her vows of a nun. Her self-destructive habits prevented her from fully embracing God's call
- Suddenly, she became suddenly very ill with a strange sickness. When her confessor came to her room to give her the sacraments, he saw all of the luxurious & nice objects in her room and reproved her
- Following the instruction of her confessor, she tried to get rid of her worldly & luxurious lifestyle - with no success. That is, until she invoked the aid of St. Catherine of Siena to help her
- She began to lead a very penitential life for the rest of her life. She went barefoot, wore an old habit that had been discarded by another sister, & performed the lowliest & most trying chores around the monastery. She ate only food mixed with bitter herbs. Her bed was made of a few bare boards with a single blanket & a stone as her pillow. She fostered a special devotion to the sufferings of Christ; and in memory of them, she subjected herself to special austerities on Fridays and in Holy Week
- Her penitential life inspired her sisters in her convent

Servant of God RAGHEED AZIZ GANNI

January 20, 1972–June 3, 2007

QUOTE



There are days when I feel frail and full of fear. But when, holding the Eucharist, I say 'Behold the Lamb of God. Behold him who takes away the sin of the world', I feel His strength in me. When I hold the Host in my hands, it is really He who is holding me and all of us...keeping us united in His boundless love...In normal times, everything is taken for granted and we forget the greatest gift that is made to us. Ironically, through terrorist violence that we have truly learned that it is the Eucharist, the Christ who died and rose, that gives us life. And this allows us to resist and hope.



FACTS

- Devout Chaldean Catholic in a large family from Iraq
- Ragheed had a big personality and quick humor and studied civil engineering when he felt called to the priesthood
- Went to seminary in Rome since there was no seminary in Iraq in 1996; with a strong anti-Catholic persecutions in his home state, he was ordained a priest but stayed in Rome to earn his degree for 2 years but his thoughts remained with his people and their suffering in Iraq
- While studying in Rome, he made a point to be actively engaged with the poor, and frequently volunteered with the Sant'Egidio community, delivering meals to the homeless
- In 2003, in spite of the persecutions and serious risk of returning to Iraq, Fr. Ragheed chose to go back to his home diocese. He was assigned to the Church of the Holy Spirit in Mosul. From the beginning, his priestly ministry was marked with persecution and suffering. His Church was attacked several times and his own life repeatedly threatened
- He concluded his talk at the National Eucharistic Congress in Italy in 2005 with the following words, "There are days when I feel frail and full of fear. But when, holding the Eucharist, I say 'Behold the Lamb of God. Behold him who takes away the sin of the world', I feel His strength in me. When I hold the Host in my hands, it is really He who is holding me and all of us...keeping us united in His boundless love...In normal times, everything is taken for granted and we forget the greatest gift that is made to us. Ironically, through terrorist violence that we have truly learned that it is the Eucharist, the Christ who died and rose, that gives us life. And this allows us to resist and hope."
- Fr. Ragheed was martyred after Mass on Pentecost Sunday, June 3, 2007. He was killed with three of his deacons



Saint JUNIPERO SERRA

November 24, 1713–August 28, 1784

Feast Day: July 1

Patron Saint of: Vocations



QUOTE

All my life I have wanted to be a missionary. I have wanted to carry the Gospel message to those who have never heard of God



QUOTE

Always go forward and never turn back!

FACTS

- Born in Spain in 1713
- Made his profession into the Franciscan monastery at Convento de Jesus in 1731 and was ordained a priest around 1738. He entered the Franciscan Order and took the name of St. Francis's childlike friend, Brother Juniper
- Until he was 35, he spent most of his time in the classroom –first as a student of theology and then as a professor. He also became famous for his preaching. Suddenly he gave it all up and followed the yearning that had begun years before when he heard about the missionary work of Saint Francis Solano in South America. Junipero's desire was to convert native peoples in the New World
- Junipero's left leg became infected by an insect bite on his travels and it would remain a cross (sometimes life-threatening) for the rest of his life
- José de Galvez, the Secretary of State and of the Office for Indies of Spain, persuaded Junipero Serra to set out with him for present-day Monterey, California. The first mission founded after the 900-mile journey north was San Diego in 1769
- Started several Catholic missions around the Southern US after starting the mission in San Diego:
 - Monterey/Carmel (1770); San Antonio and San Gabriel (1771); San Luis Obispo (1772); San Francisco and San Juan Capistrano (1776); Santa Clara (1777); San Buenaventura (1782). Twelve more were founded after Serra's death
- Junipero Serra's missionary life was a long battle with cold and hunger, with unsympathetic military commanders and even with danger of death from non-Christian native peoples. Through it all his unquenchable zeal was fed by prayer each night, often from midnight till dawn. He baptized over 6,000 people and confirmed 5,000. His travels would have circled the globe

Servant of God

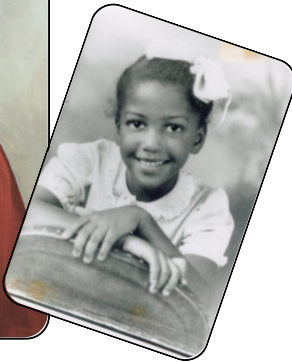
THEA BOWMAN

December 29, 1937–March 30, 1990

QUOTES

"Remember who you are and whose you are"

"What does it mean to be Black and Catholic? It means that I come to my Church fully functioning. I bring myself; my Black self, all that I am, all that I have, all that I hope to become"



QUOTE

We unite ourselves with Christ's redemptive work when we reconcile, when we make peace, when we share the good news that God is in our lives, when we reflect to our brothers and sisters God's healing, God's forgiveness, God's unconditional love



FACTS

- Born in Yazoo City, Mississippi as Bertha Elizabeth Bowman, a granddaughter of slaves
- At 9, Thea decided to become a Catholic with permission from her parents
- Her conversion was rooted in what she witnessed: she was attracted to the Catholic Church by the example of how Catholics seemed to love & care for one another, most especially the poor & needy. For Thea, she was impressed by how Catholics put their faith into action. At 15, she told her parents & friends she wanted to join the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration & left home to venture to the unfamiliar Wisconsin where she would be the only African-American member of her religious community
- She took the name Thea in honor of her father, Theon. In 1972, Sister Thea earned a Ph.D. in English from The Catholic University of America. After her studies at Oxford University, Thea began to teach English at Viterbo College, in Wisconsin
- In 1984, both of her parents died & she was diagnosed with breast cancer
- In 1989, Thea, Frail, wheelchair bound, addressed the US Catholic Bishops at their summer meeting at Seton Hall University. Thea spoke of the Church as her "home," as her "family of families," & her journey to her final home
- She worked diligently at education & evangelization of Black American Catholics. The Church in the South had been wounded by the history of segregation & slavery. The social structures of sin prevented the marginalized people from feeling welcome in the Church that they saw as a Church of white people. She traveled across the American continent & even abroad to the Caribbean Islands & Africa to spread a ministry of joy—a ministry of proclaiming the joy of each culture's unique differences yet their unity in Christ.
- She spent her life fighting evil, especially prejudice, suspicion, hatred & things that drive people apart. She fought for God & God's people until her death

Saint JOSEMARÍA ESCRIVÁ

January 9, 1902–June 26, 1975

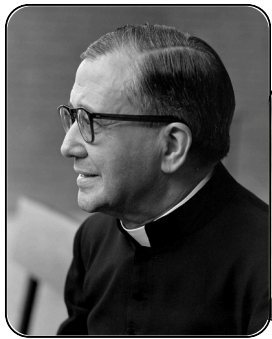
Feast Day: June 26

Patron Saint of: People with diabetes and "the ordinary"



QUOTE

The life of a man who lives by faith will always be the story of the mercies of God. At some moments the story may perhaps be difficult to read, because everything can seem useless and even a failure. But at other times Our Lord lets one see how the fruit abounds and then it is natural for one's soul to break out in thanksgiving



QUOTE

Sanctity is not for a privileged few. The Lord calls all of us. He expects love from all of us—from everyone, wherever they are; from everyone, whatever their state in life, their profession or job. For the daily life we live, apparently so ordinary, can be a path to sanctity: it is not necessary to abandon one's place in the world in order to search for God... because all the paths of the earth can be the occasion for an encounter with Christ

FACTS

- Born in Barbastro, Spain in 1902
- He was ordained to the priesthood in Zaragoza, Spain on March 28, 1925
- He developed a prayer life intensely centered on the Eucharist during his priestly studies in Logroño, and also cultivated deep devotion to Mary and would often pray for her to ask God to reveal his will to him
- While on retreat, Josemaría saw the mission God intended for him, that of opening up a new spirituality and vocational path for the laity in the form of Opus Dei ("the work of God"). This prelature would become the central focus of his life, serving many of the unmet spiritual needs of lay people at the time
- Opus Dei is a Personal Prelature of the Catholic Church that fosters among Christians the search for holiness in the world, especially in the ordinary circumstances of life and the sanctification of work
- Josemaría welcomed Pope John XXIII's calling of the Second Vatican Council. His work in expanding the way to holiness for lay persons was seen by the Council Fathers as a precursor to Vatican II's renewed focus on the life of the laity. He worked swiftly to implement the Council's decisions into the life and spirituality of Opus Dei
- Saint Josemaría Escrivá suffered from diabetes for over ten years. After a near-fatal anaphylactic shock in 1954, he was miraculously cured of the disease.
- On June 26, 1975, Josemaría died in his workroom of a heart attack. The last thing he ever looked upon was an hanging icon of Our Lady. At his death, Opus Dei was present on all inhabited continents, numbering over 60,000 people from more than 80 nationalities

Saint

MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE

July 22, 1647–October 17, 1690

Feast Day: October 16

Patron Saint of: Those suffering with polio, devotees of the Sacred Heart, loss of parents



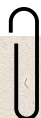
QUOTE



I saw this divine Heart as on a throne of flames, more brilliant than the sun and transparent as crystal. It had its adorable wound and was encircled with a crown of thorns, which signified the pricks our sins caused Him.



QUOTE



I need nothing but God, and to lose myself in the heart of Jesus

FACTS

- Her early years were marked by sickness and a painful home situation. Rheumatic fever confined her to her bed for four years. After making a vow to the Blessed Virgin Mary to consecrate herself to religious life, Margaret instantly returned to perfect health. In recognition of this favor, Margaret added the name Mary to her baptismal name
- After considering marriage for some time, Margaret Mary entered the Order of the Visitation nuns at the age of 24
- In December 1674, after 3 years a nun, Margaret Mary Alacoque received the first of her revelations. She felt “invested” with the presence of God, though always afraid of deceiving herself in such matters. The request of Christ was that his love for humankind be made evident through her
- During the next 13 months, Christ appeared to her. His human heart was to be the symbol of his divine-human love. By her own love Margaret Mary was to make up for the coldness and ingratitude of the world—by frequent and loving Holy Communion, especially on the 1st Friday each month, and by an hour’s vigil of prayer every Thursday night. He also asked that a feast of reparation be instituted
- She has always shown an intense love for the Blessed Sacrament and preferred silence over typical play.
- Started what we commonly call “Holy Hour” after she was commanded by Jesus, in a vision, to meditate on Jesus' Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane
- Started the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus after she saw a vision of his Sacred Heart
- In 1673, Jesus appeared to Margaret Mary again, and allowed her to rest her head on His heart. His human heart was to be the symbol of His divine-human love. He revealed to her the wonders of His love. He explained to her that he wished to make these wonders known to all the world, and that He chose her for His work
- She died a couple of years later, at the age of 43, on October 17, 1690, while being anointed. She spoke the words, “I need nothing but God, and to lose myself in the heart of Jesus.”

Saint PETER THE APOSTLE

Unknown-64

Feast Day: June 29

Patron Saint of: Fishermen, net makers, and ship builders



QUOTE

What matters is not your outward appearance. . . but your inner disposition. Cultivate inner beauty, the gentle gracious kind that God delights in.



QUOTE

Until we have a passionate love for our Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament we shall accomplish nothing.

FACTS

- Also known as Simon Peter of Cephas, is considered the first Pope. Despite his papacy, Peter had humble beginnings and became one of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus. He was ordained by Jesus in the "Rock of My Church" in Mt 16:17-18
- After he was asked to follow Jesus, Peter followed Jesus & his life was changed forever. Though he was one of the first disciples called to follow Jesus & eventually became the spokesman for the group, Peter is known for his "little faith."
- There are 2 famous accounts of St. Peter in the Bible:
 - Walking on water with Jesus
 - Denying Jesus 3 times when Jesus was arrested prior to his Crucifixion
- Following Christ's Crucifixion & Resurrection, it was Peter who first entered the empty tomb. It was described in Luke 24:12 that when Peter heard the women claim Jesus' tomb was empty, he "went off to the tomb, running. He bent down and looked in and saw the linen cloths but nothing else; he then went back home, amazed at what had happened."
- Peter was instrumental in bringing the Gospel to the Gentiles. He baptized the Roman pagan Cornelius, & at the Council of Jerusalem gave his support to preach to Gentiles, thereby permitting the new Church to become universal
- Following an escape, Peter resumed his apostolate in Jerusalem & his missionary efforts included travels to such cities of the pagan world as Antioch, Corinth, & eventually Rome. He made reference to the Eternal City in his first Epistle by noting that he writes from Babylon. Through a variety of works, it is certain that Peter died in Rome & that his martyrdom came during the reign of Emperor Nero, believed to be in 64 AD
- Testimony of his martyrdom is extensive, including Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea, St. Clement I of Rome, St. Ignatius, and St. Irenaeus. According to rich tradition, Peter was crucified on the Vatican Hill upside down because he declared himself unworthy to die in the same manner as the Lord

Saint CATHERINE OF SIENA

1347–1380

Feast Day: April 29

Patron Saint of: Fire prevention



QUOTES

“Be who you are, and you will set the world ablaze”

“The devil fears hearts on fire with love of God.”



QUOTE

To show the love we have to Him, we ought to serve and love every rational creature.

FACTS

- She was born during the outbreak of the plague in Siena, Italy. She was the 25th child born to her mother, although half of her brothers and sisters did not survive childhood. Catherine herself was a twin, but her sister did not survive infancy. Her mother was 40 when she was born
- At 16, Catherine’s sister, Bonaventura, died, leaving her husband as a widower. Catherine’s parents proposed that he marry Catherine as a replacement, but Catherine opposed this. She began fasting and cut her hair short to mar her appearance
- Despite Catherine’s religious nature, she did not choose to enter a convent and instead she joined the Third Order of St. Dominic, which allowed her to associate with a religious society while living at home
- Fellow Dominican sisters taught St. Catherine how to read. Meanwhile, she lived quietly, isolated within her family home
- St. Catherine developed a habit of giving things away and she continually gave away her family’s food and clothing to people in need. She never asked permission to give these things away, and she quietly put up with their criticisms
- St. Catherine allegedly was given the stigmata, but like her ring, it was visible only to herself until her death
- She became involved in the fractured politics of her time, but was instrumental in restoring the Papacy to Rome and in brokering peace deals during a time of factional conflict and war between the Italian city states
- She also established a monastery for women in 1377 outside of Siena. She is credited with composing over 400 letters, her Dialogue, which is her definitive work, and her prayers. These works are so influential that St. Catherine would later be declared a Doctor of the Church. She is one of the most influential and popular saints in the Church
- In January of 1380, her illness accelerated her inability to eat and drink. Within weeks, she was unable to use her legs. She died on April 29, following a stroke just a week prior

Saints

PERPETUA AND FELICITY

Unknown-203

Feast Day: March 7

Patron Saint of: mothers, expectant mothers, ranchers and butchers



QUOTE

Stand fast in the faith, and love one another, all of you, and be not offended at my sufferings

- St. Perpetua



QUOTE

Now I myself suffer what I am suffering; but then there will be Another in me who will suffer for me, because I am to suffer for him.

- St. Felicity

FACTS

- Saints Perpetua & Felicity were Christian martyrs who lived during the early persecution of the Church in Africa by Emperor Severus
- Not much is known about their lives, but their imprisonment & execution is widely & well documented
- In 203 Perpetua, a well-educated noblewoman, made the decision to follow the path of her mother & become a Christian, although she knew it could mean her death
- Perpetua's answer to her pagan father who was telling her to reject her faith, was simple & clear. Pointing to a water jug, she asked her father, "See that pot lying there? Can you call it by any other name than what it is?"
- Her father answered, "Of course not." Perpetua responded, "Neither can I call myself by any other name than what I am -- a Christian."
- This answer upset her father & he attacked her. Perpetua reports that after that incident she was glad to be separated from him for a few days
- Perpetua was arrested with 5 others, including two slaves, Felicity & Revocatus, including their teacher
- Perpetua and Felicity were very afraid, but during all this horror, Perpetua's most excruciating pain came from being separated from her newborn baby
- The young slave, Felicity was even worse off than Perpetua, for Felicity suffered the stifling heat, overcrowding, & rough handling while being eight months pregnant
- Felicity was in torment. It was against the law for pregnant women to be executed. To kill a child in the womb was shedding innocent & sacred blood. Felicity was afraid that she would not give birth before the day set for their martyrdom & her companions would go on without her. Her friends also didn't want to leave so "good a comrade" behind.
- Two days before the execution, Felicity went into a painful labor. The guards made fun of her, insulting her by saying, "If you think you suffer now, how will stand it when you face the wild beasts?" Felicity answered them calmly, "Now I'm the one who is suffering, but in the arena, another will be in me suffering for me because I will be suffering for him."
- She gave birth to a healthy girl who was adopted & raised by one of the Christian women of Carthage

Saint

THERESA BENEDICTA OF THE CROSS

October 12, 1891–August 9, 1942

Feast Day: August 9

Patron Saint of: Europe, Loss of Parents,
Converted Jews, and Martyrs



QUOTES

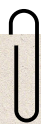


“The world doesn't need what women have, it needs what women are”

“Anyone who seeks truth seeks God, whether or not he realizes it”



QUOTE



Our love of neighbor is the measure of our love of God. For Christians – and not only for them – no one is a ‘stranger’. The love of Christ knows no borders.

FACTS

- Also known as Edith Stein
- Edith Stein was born into a devout Jewish family in Germany, on October 12, 1891. She was an intellectually gifted child who, by her adolescence, declared herself an atheist
- Her journey into academia led her to the University of Göttingen, where she completed her doctorate on the topic of empathy, which only became more important in her later religious vocation. Her conversion to Catholicism in 1922 was sparked by an encounter with the autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila, which revealed to her that intellectual pursuits and spirituality could go hand in hand
- As Nazism spread across Germany, Edith's dual identity as a Jew and a Catholic placed her in the crosshairs of escalating persecution. She didn't back down. Instead, she entered the Carmelite convent in 1933, adopting the name Teresa Benedicta of the Cross.
- The escalation of World War II forced Teresa Benedicta and her sister Rosa, also a convert, to relocate to a Carmelite monastery in the Netherlands for safety. But when a Dutch Bishop publicly condemned Nazi policies, the Gestapo retaliated by arresting Teresa and her sister and bringing them to Auschwitz
- One of the officials at Auschwitz was so impressed by Teresa Benedicta's peace and spiritual strength that he offered to help her escape. This was her response: “If somebody intervened at this point and took away my chance to share in the fate of my brothers and sisters, that would be utter annihilation.” She was eventually executed in a gas chamber in 1942
- She became involved in the fractured politics of her time, but was instrumental in restoring the Papacy to Rome and in brokering peace deals during a time of factional conflict and war between the Italian city states
- Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross never doubted the existence of good and evil. She chose the good, clung to the good, and brought the good to others in the worst of circumstances. Her life challenged the depths of evil with the profound power of faith and sacrifice