

# Queen of the Americas Guild - 2021 Annual Conference

July 30&31, 2021 - Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, La Crosse, Wisconsin

*“Saint Gianna and Pietro Molla: My Saint Mom and My Holy Dad –  
Living by Their Powerful and Inspiring Example”*

Witness of Dr. Gianna Emanuela Molla, M.D.

**First of all**, as I usually do every morning when I wake up and open my eyes, I would like to thank the Lord, the Virgin Mary - who did meet my parents' hearts -, my most beloved and Saint Mom and my most beloved and Holy Dad, truly her most worthy spouse, for the gift of life, which is really all. Life is really the greatest, the most important, the most precious and the most sacred gift we always ought to honor, respect and defend.

**I decided to begin** my witness by reading a letter that my Dad wrote to my Mom.

**I share that**, while she was expecting my sister Laura, the third-born, my Dad had to take a long business trip to the United States of America, from April 26<sup>th</sup> to June 16<sup>th</sup>, 1959. During this time, they wrote a letter to each other, almost every day, to be closer to one another.

**While reading these letters**, I understood that it is not the actual distance that allows us to feel close to a person, or farther apart: even though Mom and Dad were thousands of Kilometers apart, they were in fact deeply close to each other, thanks to the immense love which united them, and to their very intense, mutual prayer.

**My Mom loved being in and contemplating nature very much**, because she saw a reflection of the Creator's love in the wonders of Creation. Therefore, my Dad, in the first part of his letter, gives her a description of what he was seeing from the airplane while he was flying over the Rocky Mountains and the Grand Canyon, so that she could enjoy so much beauty as well.

**I remember when I read this letter with my Dad**, and I told him: «O Papa, you are a poet!»; with all his deep humility, he lowered his eyes without saying anything. Then, I added: «O Papa, certainly the Holy Spirit enlightened you to write such a letter to Mom, otherwise you would not have been able!»; at this point, he agreed and told me: «*Certainly!*».

**Moreover**, since my Mom was always very worried when he travelled by airplane - and in America the distances are so great that only a few times could he travel by train, instead of by airplane, so that she would be more at ease -, in this letter he also wrote a prayer, which is magnificent in my opinion, entitled: *The prayer of my flights*.

«New York, May 31, 1959, Sunday, 1:50 P.M.

(Mountain Standard Time) 8:50 PM Italian Time

**My most beloved Gianna,**

*I'm flying in a magnificent sky - at an altitude of 6,000 meters - above the Rocky Mountains and the Grand Canyon of Colorado and Utah. It's a sight I will never forget: eroded mountains, rising straight up from the rivers and valleys, rivers which wear the rock away and snake through it: green rivers and blue lakes; rocks which*

go from golden yellow to scarlet red and to dark red and copper. It's a sight with a grandeur that I never expected.

And in this sky and above these rocks which at times break down into a desert of red sand and which speak more than ever of the power and the Providence of the Creator, I repeat the prayer I say when I fly. I begin at this moment when we are between the Heavens and the rocks, and I am looking at the marvelous pictures of you and our Treasures, which I kiss up here in the Heavens:

*“Jesus, who created me and preserves me with graces and blessings without number: You who among the long flights of time and of today, up here in the Heavens, have given me the immense gift of a Wife of gold, as the most marvelous dawn which can only be admired from up here, and of two Treasures, who are as splendid as the sky in its full brightness, which can only be embraced from on high: You who will soon give us again the divine gift of another Treasure, listen to my prayer:*

*Bless Gianna and our Treasures! Transform into graces their anxiety and worry over my long absence and my flights.*

*Please hear, today and always, the prayers of Gianna, of my Gigetto, of my mother and of all those who love me! Look upon my Mariolina's little folded hands! Grant me the grace of a happy return!*

*And grant that I may advance always in Your Ways at every moment, just as the plane flies right on course, safe, directed by radio.*

*May I always have a holy Fear of you, the kind one can feel up here, where I am entrusted more than ever to your Divine Providence, sustained on the wings of the prayers of Gianna, of my Treasures, of my mother and of all those who pray for me.*

*Grant that a serene and luminous atmosphere may always enfold our family, like the atmosphere in the sky through which I am flying, and the purity of the clear air I am breathing.*

*Grant that the clouds just skim over us and quickly depart from us, like the little clouds up here.*

*Keep my family and my dear ones safe, happy and peaceful in Your Ways and in Your Light, today and always until the day we will fly up, up, always higher, up to You. Amen”».*

**My Mom answered him:** «... you really are the dearest and most affectionate little husband, a saintly papa, not of gold, but of diamond, the biggest and most precious one there is on this earth!».

**Mom was perfectly right: he really was «a saintly papa...of diamond»**, and this is the reason why, on January 2003, I felt it my duty to leave my profession as a geriatrician to take care of him. When he started to have serious health problems he was 90 years old, and he was still very active in the work of spreading in the world the figure and the example of his Saint Spouse; because of these health problems, he needed the continuous presence of a doctor in order that he could stay in his home, as he wished.

I thought: since he has always loved my brothers and me with a boundless love, this is the least I can do for him; if I devote all my time to him, this is the greatest gift I can give to him, together with loving him; if God's will had been different, my Mom would now be beside him. Keeping always near him, I felt I would make her happy, too; it was like doing something for her as well.

That's how I had the grace, the joy and the honor to assist him during the last 7 (seven) years and 3 (three) months of his long life, night and day; I felt like I was an instrument in God's hands by helping him as a physician too. On the 3rd of April 2010, on Holy Saturday, he joined his most beloved Spouse in Paradise, at the age of almost 98. He had a lucid mind till the very last day of his life, and during these years we spent together I was able to know still more about my Mom through him.

**My Mom was born in Magenta**, province of Milan, on October 4, 1922, the day of Saint Francis' Feast; together with the gift of life, the Lord gave her two deeply Christian parents, Maria De Micheli and Alberto Beretta, both belonged to the Franciscan Third Order.

She was the tenth of thirteen children, five of them died when they were infants, and three of them consecrated themselves to God: Enrico, a physician missionary, became friar Capuchin in Grajaù, Brazil, with the name of Father Alberto Maria; Giuseppe, a priest engineer, and Virginia, a physician and Canossian Sister. My aunt, Mother Virginia, is my only aunt who is alive: she is almost 96 years old, and, thanks to be God, she is still in good health.

Since her youth, Mom placed the Lord at the very center of her life.

While she studied hard medicine, she expressed her great faith through a very generous apostolate service among the young women of Catholic Action and in charitable activities with the old and the needy with the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

She practiced her profession as a physician as a true mission, seeing in her patients Jesus Himself.

She has always prayed a lot, setting an example for her young women of Catholic Action. She said her daily Holy Rosary - a habit which had started already in her childhood, when she prayed her Rosary with all her family.

At the same time, while praying a great deal and asking for prayers from others, she was wondering about what her vocation could be, which she considered a gift from God as well; for this reason, she worried about knowing God's will for her, to be able to serve Him in the best way. She was not in a hurry: she went on to pray until she was sure of the vocation to which the Lord was calling her.

At first, she thought she could be a lay missionary in Brazil, to help her brother, Father Alberto, as a physician. But her body was not strong enough to bear the equatorial heat, and her Spiritual Director was able to convince her that her vocation was different - otherwise the Lord would have given her the health necessary (to go to Brazil); he encouraged her to form a holy family herself too, like her original family had been, while imitating the example of her parents.

Then, since she felt the Lord was calling her to the vocation of marriage, she embraced it with all her joy and all her enthusiasm.

In June 1954, at the age of almost 32, she went to Lourdes together with another of her brothers who was a physician as well, Ferdinando, who was travelling by train with Unitalsi (a charity which takes ill people to Lourdes) to take the sick, because she wished to pray to Our Lady of Lourdes to let her meet the man who would be her spouse, the man that the Lord had prepared for her since eternity.

**My Dad was born in Mesero**, a little town close to Magenta, on July 1, 1912. His parents, Maria Salmoiraghi and Luigi Molla, were two deeply Christian parents. He was the fourth of eight children: his three brothers born before him died in their first year of life. After him, four sisters were born: Teresina, who was born into Heaven at only 23 years old; Luigia, who consecrated herself to God as a Sister of the Most Precious Blood; Rosetta and Adelaide, who followed the vocation of marriage.

He was ten years older than my Mom, and when he met her, his parents were still alive. He was a man of great faith and extraordinary virtues. From his youth, he had placed the Lord at the very center of his life, like she did too. He was also a member of Catholic Action, even if, with all his deep humility, he used to tell me: *«I have not done anything in comparison to what your Mother did!»*, making reference to the executive roles that my Mom has also held in this lay Association. He was a lay man who was actively involved in his Mesero Parish Church's activities, especially as a young man. He was a mechanical engineer, temporary Director of S.A.F.F.A., a big and well known matches factory in Ponte Nuovo, a small suburban village in the municipal district of the city of Magenta, where he had moved to live since the '40 (forties) years.

I can say that, on the one hand, together with his great faith which permeated and strengthened every single aspect of his life, my Dad had a great devotion to work - he worked very much, too much! Then, only my Mom was able to save him a little bit from all this work, bringing him to the Concerts of classical music, and to take mountain trips! -, and a great affection for his parents and his sisters; on the other hand, he felt the Lord was calling him to the vocation of marriage, and he had a great desire to have his own family. He was praying a great deal to Our Lady to let him meet *«A holy mother for his children»*.

**The Lord was really calling my parents to the vocation of marriage** just as they thought, because the Virgin Mary had heard their prayers. And so, thanks to Her, their wonderful hearts and souls could meet at last, because they already knew each other five years before this!

Dad was an extremely reserved and shy person, and Mom was the first to declare her love.

**«Kind Doctor»**: with these words, on January 12, 1955, he began his first letter he wrote to her from Stockholm, while he was on business; this is a very formal letter, also in its conclusion: *«With a cordial greeting from, Pietro Molla»*.

In her very first letter, on the 21st of February 1955, she wrote to him: *«Dearest Pietro, ... I really want to make you happy and be what you desire: good, understanding, and ready for the sacrifices that life will require of us. ... Now there is you, whom I already love, and to whom I intend to give myself to form a truly Christian family. Ciao, dear Pietro. Pardon my familiarity, but that's how I am. Arrivederci. With affection, Gianna»*. She doesn't write: "I really want to be happy", because she would have found her happiness in making her Pietro happy!

I can imagine the immense joy of my Dad! The day after he answered her: *«My dearest Gianna, I have read your letter over and over, and kissed it. A new life is beginning for me: the life of your great and greatly desired affection and of your radiant goodness. .... I love you, my dearest Gianna. I could not have received a greater or more ardently desired grace from our Heavenly Mother, Our Lady of Good Counsel, as she is invoked in my little church*

*in Ponte Nuovo. ... I too want to make you happy and understand you well. Forgive me for not beginning a closer confidence sooner than I did. Thank you for your help and trust. With all my love, Pietro».*

**From now on**, they created more and more frequent occasions to meet each other, to confide their desires and aspirations, hopes and certainties, understanding one another always better.

**They lived their engagement time as “a time of grace”**, with great joy and deep gratitude to the Lord and to the Virgin Mary as they prayed to them for their future family every day more and more. They were ready to face life’s sorrows, too. On 5th July 1955, Mom wrote to Dad: *«My dearest Pietro, .... It’s true, there will be sorrows, too, but if we always love each other as we do now, then, with God’s help, we’ll know how to bear them together. Don’t you think so? For now, though, let’s enjoy the happiness of loving each other. I was always told that the secret of happiness is to live moment by moment and to thank the Lord for all that He, in his goodness, sends to us day after day. ...».*

Two weeks before their wedding day, on 10<sup>th</sup> September 1955, Dad touched Mom’s heart with these words: *«Dearest Gianna, ... you and I have undertaken our new life with the certainty that God wanted us together. These months have all been a crescendo of understanding and affection. Now we understand each other perfectly, because Heaven is our light and the Divine Law our guide... Now our love is full because we are one heart and soul, one feeling and love, because our love, strong and pure, knows how to wait for the blessing of Heaven. ...».*

And she answered him with beautiful words as well: *«... Dearest Pietro, I’m sure that you will always make me as happy as I am now and that the Lord will listen to your prayers, coming from a heart that has always loved him and served him in a saintly way.*

*Pietro, how much I have to learn from you! You are such a fine example for me, and I thank you for it.*

*With God’s help and blessing, we will do all we can to make our new family a little cenacle where Jesus will reign over all our affections, desires, and actions.*

*My Pietro, our wedding is just a few days away now, and I feel very moved to be so near to receiving the Sacrament of Love. We will be working with God in his creation; in this way we can give Him children who will love and serve Him.....».*

**To prepare spiritually** to receive “the Sacrament of Love”, Mom proposed to Dad to make a triduum: Holy Mass and Holy Communion on September 21-22-23, each in his or her own dearest Marian Sanctuary, so that the Virgin Mary could join and bring their prayers to Her Jesus.

Dad thanked Mom for the triduum “*holy suggestion*”, that he welcomed with all his enthusiasm.

**They got married in Magenta**, on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1955, in the Basilica of Saint Martin, Mom’s Parish Church, where she was baptized too. They settled in Ponte Nuovo of Magenta. Father Giuseppe, Mom’s brother, blessed their Marriage. On 11<sup>th</sup> April, in the Canossian Sisters Church he had blessed their official engagement.

Dad used to tell me that, because of his shy and reserved character, he would have preferred to get married in a small, secluded Church in the mountain, in the presence of few persons.

He made the really great sacrifice to get married in this big Basilica with pleasure, to please his Gianna.

**After their marriage**, they prayed a great deal to the Lord and to the Virgin Mary to receive the very eagerly awaited divine gift of children. On December 13th, 1955, about two months and a half after their wedding, Dad wrote his very first letter to Mom as her husband, from Zurich, Switzerland, while he was there on business; this letter comprises this wonderful prayer: «*Dearest wife, ... Last night, at every Joyful Mystery of the Holy Rosary I had a special prayer for you and for our new family. "May the Lord and our Heavenly Mother bless our love and render it fruitful!"*»

*Hasten the day when Gianna, happier than she has ever been before, can share with me and our loved ones the holy news that a new life stirs within her! After this Christmas, may the Christmases to come see our children praying before Baby Jesus! O Lord, O Heavenly Mother, give us the grace and joy of bringing our children to your altar and consecrating them to You!*

*O Lord, keep us always vigilant, like the Holy Family of Nazareth, to give our children a holy education!...».*

**Their prayers were heard.** My brother Pierluigi was born on 19<sup>th</sup> November 1956, my sister Maria Zita (Mariolina) was born on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1957 - according to God's will, she died at the tender age of 6, two years after Mom's death, of an acute glomerulonephritis and kidney failure - and my sister Laura was born on 15<sup>th</sup> July 1959. All of them were welcomed as wonderful gifts of God.

**Along with their conjugal and family life**, my parents made concrete and brought to fruition all the aspirations, desires, and promises of their time of engagement, always living in God's grace, with His blessing and continuously doing His holy will. They always lived their love in the light of faith, and this is very clear reading their magnificent letters, in which the Lord and the Virgin Mary are always present.

**There are many aspects** of my parents' marriage that profoundly enlighten me and move me including their deep faith and unwavering confidence in Divine Providence, their deep humility - I think that humility is the fundamental virtue to become a saint, and the indispensable virtue for having all the other virtues - , and their infinite mutual love, which made them more serene and stronger. I am also deeply touched by their immeasurable love for us, the children, and their family, their great mutual esteem, their reciprocal continuous communication and support, their intense and constant prayers of gratitude to the Lord and the Virgin Mary, and their love and charity towards their neighbors. They truly lived the Sacrament of Marriage as a vocation and as a path towards holiness.

**As I transcribed Dad's letters to Mom** which were published only after his death - when he was alive, he didn't want his letters published, because he was very reserved; therefore, at first, only Mom's letters to him were published -, I understood completely that their love was so great, and could only be so great, profound, and true because the Lord and Our Heavenly Mother were an integral part of this love, just as they were already an integral part of their whole lives, even before they met each other. I think their journey of holiness certainly started before their meeting!

**My Mom practiced her profession** as family physician in Mesero, where, on July 1, 1950, she opened a "doctor's surgery", and, from 1956 onwards, in Ponte Nuovo too. Here,

as a pediatrician, she devoted herself to work as the person in charge of the Advisory Centre for mothers and for the Nursery linked to the Opera Nazionale Maternità e Infanzia (O.N.M.I., a national organization for motherhood and childhood); she also worked as a volunteer at the medical service of the Nursery School and of the Primary School of the small village. As Dad always told me, she was able to combine, with simplicity and with a great balance, her duties as a wife, a mother and a doctor, and her great joy for life; she always felt fully realized. In this harmony, she went on living her great faith, applying it to all she did and all the decisions she made.

**She always had some difficult pregnancies;** however, she ardently desired to give Pierluigi a little brother, despite the risk a new maternity implied for her. After my sister Laura's birth, she had two miscarriages, and so I represent her sixth pregnancy in 6 years of married life: how much my parents were open to Life!

**In September 1961,** when Echography did not exist yet, about at the end of the second month of her pregnancy with me, she was diagnosed with a huge fibromyoma (fibroids), a benign tumor, in her uterus.

**As Dad testified,** the situation was worrying, and Mom was free to choose and decide among three different solutions. The first one: to remove the fibroma and put an end to that pregnancy, and end the option of ever having another baby (the safest solution for her life, in that situation and for the future); the second one: to remove the fibroma and put an end to that pregnancy, but with the option of still having a baby (the safest solution for her life in that situation, but not for the future); the third one: to remove the fibroma, to continue with the pregnancy with the option of still having a baby (the riskiest solution for her life both in that situation and for the future). She chose and decided on this third option.

Father Giuseppe, respectively my Mom's brother and my uncle, urged me to always witness to the fact that my Mom made the fundamental choice at this moment. Before the surgery to remove the fibroma, fully aware of the risk she would run in continuing the pregnancy - the risk was this: the surgery necessary to remove the fibroma would have left a scar that could rupture during the pregnancy, causing a rupture to the uterus as well, with mortal risk for her and for the baby -, she implored the surgeon to save the baby she was expecting, who was me, and she relied on prayer and Divine Providence. My life was safe. Mom thanked God and spent the 7 months before delivery with an incomparable fortitude - as Dad defined it - and unchanged involvement as a mother and a doctor.

**Some days before delivery,** although always relying on Providence and always hoping God would save her, as well, she was ready to give her life to save me, and, in a steady and, at the same time, serene voice, she told my Dad: *«Pietro, if you have to decide between the baby's life and mine, do not hesitate: choose - and I insist upon this - the child's. Do save the baby»*.

**He, who knew very well his Spouse's generosity,** her spirit of self sacrifice, her interior reflection and the strength of her choices and decisions, felt himself morally obligated to respect them, even if they could have extremely painful consequences for him and my siblings.

**On April 20, 1962,** the afternoon of Good Friday, Mom returned to St. Gerald Hospital in Monza to try natural childbirth, which was considered, at that time, a less risky option for a woman in her condition. It did not work. Then, the next morning, on April 21, on Holy

Saturday, I was born by caesarian section. Throughout his long life, my Dad never forgot the moment when my Mom picked me up into her arms, and he described it with these words: *«When you picked our little creature up into your arms, you looked at her very, very lovingly, with a look that betrayed your indescribable sorrow at not being able to enjoy her, to bring her up, and to never see her again.»*

**Just a few hours after my birth**, her general condition started to worsen, and that was the beginning of her sharing with her Jesus' passion on Calvary: she had fever, which rose higher and higher, and terrible abdominal pains caused by septic peritonitis, a complication of delivery.

My Dad testified as follows: *«On Tuesday night, her first agony, she miraculously recovered, thanks to all the prompt and very loving care of Nando (my uncle Ferdinando) and Sister Virginia. On Wednesday morning, ... she told me: “You see, now I am recovered. Pietro, I was already on the other side, if you knew what I've seen. One day I'll tell you. But because we were too happy, with our wonderful healthy children full of Grace, with all of Heaven's blessings, I was sent back here to suffer still more, because it isn't right to appear before Our Lord without a lot of sufferings. ...”*

*From that moment on, I'm sure that in her pains, in her agonies, Gianna never ceased her conversation with Our Lord and her communion with Heaven. She did wish I would no longer caress her and kiss her: she already belonged to Heaven».*

**In her agony Mom** repeated many times: *«Jesus, I love You»*, *«Jesus, I love You»*. Despite all the treatments, her condition got worse and worse, day by day.

She wanted to receive Holy Communion, at least on her lips, also on Thursday and Friday, when she was no longer able to swallow the Holy Particle. On April 28, 1962, Saturday in Albis, at dawn, she was taken back to her family home in Ponte Nuovo, as she wished and had asked of my Papa previously. She died in her nuptial bed, where she gave birth to my siblings, at 8 a.m. She was only 39.

**When I grew up** and was able to understand my Mom's extreme sacrifice, my Dad explained to me why she chose and decided in favor of my life; and so, he helped me to overcome the sense of guilt I had, from childhood, towards my siblings and my Mom as well, and to become serene. He told me that, in her mind, I had the same right to life as my siblings already born; that she knew very well that in that very moment she herself represented, for me, the instrument of Divine Providence to bring me into the world. As for my siblings, their upbringing and growth, she fully relied on Providence through my Dad and other relatives. Really, she gave birth to me twice: first, when she conceived me; the second time, when she brought me into the world by deciding to save my life.

I remember when Dad told me that, had she made a different choice, she could have lived to 100 years old - with God's help, of course. She did not have cancer, but a benign tumor: reflecting on this, and thinking about her great joy for life, I understood how great was the sacrifice she made for me, following Jesus' teaching and example: there is no greater love than that of one who gives his life for his loved one.

**A few months after my Mom entered Heaven**, my Papa wrote a long letter addressed to my uncle, Father Alberto, his brother-in-law, of whom my Father was very fond, who lived in Brazil. This letter ends with this wonderful prayer:



*«Dearest Father Alberto, ... every day since Gianna ascended to Heaven, I have been raising this prayer to the Lord and to Gianna: “You Jesus, who have called my Bride and my children's Mother among your Angels and your Saints, grant that also today my children may grow up in wisdom and grace with You, with the Virgin Mary, with their Holy Mother, with their loved ones and all men in the same way as You grew up within Your Holy Family in Nazareth, and in the same way that their Holy Mother knew how to bring them up, day after day. Preserve them in mental and physical health just as their Holy Mother, with the help of Your grace and Your blessing, was able to assist them with her wise and very loving care.*

*Grant that my children always, every day of their lives, may be worthy of the Sanctity and Martyrdom of their Holy Mother. Grant that I may be the least unworthy as possible of my Bride's Sanctity and that I may take her place, with the help of Your grace, in tenderness and in the guidance of our children. Grant me also and my children the grace, the certainty and the indescribable comfort which allowed Saint Augustine to write of his Holy Mother in Heaven: “When you were alive I could see you where you were. Now that you are in Heaven I can feel you wherever I am”.*

*And you, Gianna, help me to carry my Cross, day after day, and to realize God's will in a heroic way. That you may obtain the divine grace for our children and for me to become saints also.*

*Grant that every day may bring us nearer to you and that every day we may ascend a step of Jacob's mystical ladder, at the top of which you are waiting for us. And grant that when God will call us as well He can find us worthy to come near, near, near to you forever. Amen».*

**I lived forty-eight years of my life with my Dad** and I can testify that Mom answered my Dad's prayer: she helped him to carry his cross, day after day, and to realize God's will in a heroic way; and when the Lord called him to Himself as well, he was most worthy to live with her forever!

**According to His will**, my parents lived their conjugal and family life together for only six and a half years, then Mom entered Paradise. During the forty-eight years that Dad lived without her visible presence, they went on to be “*one heart and soul*”, very spiritually united and in communion with each other. True love, that is the love which lasts forever, is really much stronger than death!

**I remember** that Dad prayed a great deal and continued thanking the Lord, for everything. I was surprised that, even though he had suffered tremendously during his long life, he always told me: *«Eternity will not be enough for me to thank the Lord for all the graces He granted me during my long life»*, referring, in particular, to the grace that he could be present in St. Peter Square in Rome at my Mom's proclamation as a “Saint” by Pope Saint John Paul II.

**When Dad died**, on April 3rd, 2010, Holy Saturday, Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, emeritus Archbishop of Milan, sent a handwritten note to my family with these words:

*«I share heartily in your grief for Engineer Molla's death. He was the Spouse of Saint Gianna. She will have welcomed him into Paradise with great joy, just as Easter approaches ».*

**Since that Holy Saturday**, I think of my most beloved “Papa d’oro” (literally “of gold”) - as his Gianna lovingly called him: “*Pedrin d’or*” - joined to his adored Spouse, and my most beloved Mom, forever; I always feel them near me, or better, “glued” to me, to protect me and guide my steps; I turn to them with my prayers continuously, and I know they listen to me.

**More and more people** - cardinals, bishops, priests, consecrated persons, including cloistered nuns, and laity -, from different parts of the world, have told me and written to me that the Lord blessed me with two “**holy parents**”; that Gianna and Pietro are two “**holy spouses**”, and that they pray to them and ask for their intercession. On the other hand, my Mom was the first person who recognized the holiness of my Dad and followed his example, and this is clear in the letters she wrote to him; her words have an even greater meaning and value now that the Church has canonized her as a Saint.

On the occasion of Lent 2014, “St. Gregory the Great Parish” in Milan invited me to comment on the last four Stations of the Cross, asking me, in particular, to develop this theme: *What my Parents’ lives teach me about the Way of the Cross*. I confess to you that it was not easy for me: I prayed and asked for the help of the Holy Spirit so that He could enlighten me, and the following reflections resulted.

**My holy parents’ lives teach me** that “*the Way of the Cross*” is certainly the sure way I have to follow, to one day attain Paradise’s joy, God’s Sight joy and forever.

The way of the Cross, which is closely and indissolubly connected to the way of the Resurrection, as our Lord Jesus has given witness and shown, is the most uncomfortable and difficult one to face as a human; however, I think it is the only way which allows us to give full and complete meaning to our life.

As our Heavenly Mother taught us well, this way implies our unconditional and continuous “Yes” to the Lord’s will, our humble acceptance of His holy will, always and in any way, even when we don’t understand it.

My holy parents’ lives teach me that “*the Way of the Cross*” is certainly “**the way of joy**” as well, of the most true and profound happiness, which is the prelude to the greatest and most profound joy of delighting in God’s Sight, one day and forever.

We can live in joy when we have the Lord in our heart, although walking along the way of the Cross, when we fulfill His holy will and when we see every single thing that occurs to us in the light of faith. This also leads us to feel the duty to thank our Lord continuously and for everything, for each breath of ours - as my Dad taught me -, for each of His gifts... even for the gift of suffering.

**And every time a “new” suffering**, even a very heavy one, occurs, a kind of suffering that arrives like “a bolt from the blue” and, against our will, it comes even as a grace to strengthen our faith, I think: «*I am on the right way*»; this thought encourages me and helps me a great deal to accept this “new” suffering, and, little by little, to accept it and “overcome” it, if we can say so, however this is humanly possible, by always thinking of the greatest Good and the greatest Joy which are awaiting me...

**To conclude**, I would like to tell you that every morning when I wake up and open my eyes, after having thanked God for the gift of life, I pray to the Lord, to the Virgin Mary and to St. Joseph to help me to be the least unworthy as possible of my Parents. I am live with

the joy and the hope of being able to embrace them again, together with Mariolina and all my other loved ones, one day, and, this time, forever, to never leave each other again!

**I assure you** of my daily prayer according to all the intentions you have in your heart. Please, pray for me and my mission. I thank you again for having invited me here to give my witness: it has truly been a great joy and a great honor for me.

## **The Saint Gianna Beretta Molla and Pietro Molla Foundation**

**A North Dakota Non-Profit Corporation**

**Diocese of Fargo, ND**

**Founder and President: Cardinal Raymond Leo Burke.**

**Other Founders:** Father Timothy P. Elliott, Founding Pastor of the Saint Gianna Catholic Church in Wentzville, Missouri, and me, Gianna Emanuela.

*«The Foundation is not for profit and pursues exclusively essential religious, educational and charitable purposes, aiming to honor, perpetuate and spread around the world the memory, example, testimony and spirituality of Saint Gianna and her saintly spouse Pietro.*

...

*This exemplary and holy couple worked together for the good of each other, for their family, and for the good of the Church. The world today particularly needs Saint Gianna's and Pietro's beautiful example of marriage and family life, and the Foundation is honored to serve this mission, for the good of many souls and families».*

(from Article III of the Bylaws)

## **The Saint Gianna and Pietro Molla International Center for Family and Life**

***Under the Patronage of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus, Mary and Joseph***

**Diocese of Springfield in Illinois**

- **The Center is the greatest work** of the Saint Gianna Beretta Molla and Pietro Molla Foundation.
- **The mission of the Center** is humble service to the Universal Church as a holy pilgrimage site to help spread knowledge of and devotion to my Saint Mom's and my Holy Dad's virtues and, thus, to promote the holiness of the family and respect for the sanctity of all human life.

- **With God's help and blessing**, the Center will be a peaceful place of prayer, meditation, learning, study and spirituality for pilgrims; a place for the spiritual good, the hope, and the encouragement of many people, in particular for those who suffer or have various physical, emotional, or spiritual difficulties.
- **The Center wishes to give glory and honor to God** through devotion to my Saint Mom and my Holy Dad.

**The architectural project of the Center** includes the construction of the following buildings:

- **a replica of the spousal home** of my Holy Parents as it was in Ponte Nuovo of Magenta (Milan) - Italy
- **a Pilgrim Center**
- **a replica of the original Chapel of Our Lady of Good Counsel** with attached Rectory as it was in Ponte Nuovo of Magenta
- **a Shrine Church of Saint Gianna**, my Saint Mom
- **a Rectory** for visiting Clergy
- **the Way of the Cross** and the **Way of the Rosary**
- **outdoor services** according to the needs that arise...

### *My Saint Mom and My Holy Dad - Living by Their Powerful and Inspiring Example*

- ***I think** my Saint Mom's and my Holy Dad's powerful and inspiring example can enlighten the Christian journey of young people, fiancées, spouses, parents and families, and encourage, support and comfort them along life's trials, difficulties and sufferings.*
- ***I don't really know** how I can thank the Lord for the so precious gift of my Holy Parents, and every day I pray to them, with all my heart, for all the people who ask for their intercession, in different parts of the world.*
- ***I assure you** of my daily prayer to my Saint Mom and my Holy Dad according to all your intentions, and I humbly ask you to pray for me and my Mission.*

***Thank you so very much!!!***