

LIFE: UNBORN CHILDREN

Saint Gianna Beretta Molla is the patron saint for unborn children. Her feast day is April 28.

In *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life), St. John Paul II noted the "tendency to interpret crimes against life as legitimate expressions of individual freedom, to be acknowledged and protected as actual rights" (no. 18). Instead of wagging his finger of condemnation, however, he notes that "Society as a whole must respect, defend and promote the dignity of every human person, at every moment and in every condition of that person's life" (no. 81).

This respect and defense, St. John Paul II continues, is what it means to follow the commandment "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." "By his words and actions Jesus further unveils the positive requirements of the commandment regarding the inviolability of life ... protecting and defending life when it was weak and threatened: in the case of foreigners, widows, orphans, the sick and the poor in general, including [unborn children]" (no. 41).

"In our service of charity ... we must care for the other as a person for whom God has made us responsible. As disciples of Jesus, we are called to become neighbors to everyone (cf. Lk 10:29-37), and to show special favor to those who are poorest, most alone and most in need. In helping the hungry, the thirsty, the foreigner, the naked, the sick, the imprisoned-as well as the [unborn child] and the old person who is suffering or near death-we have the opportunity to serve Jesus" (no. 87).

St. Gianna, pray for us.

