

Pope canonizes five saints

Carol Glatz/CNS

VATICAN CITY — Pope John Paul II elevated one layperson and five religious to sainthood May 16 in St. Peter's Square, noting that the six new saints trusted completely in Jesus' promise of peace.

"True peace is the fruit of Christ's victory over the power of evil, sin and death. Who follows him faithfully will become witnesses and builders of his peace," he said.

Pietro Molla, over 90 years old and the modern church's first living husband of a saint, looked on with two daughters and one son as the pope recited the formula of canonization.

St. Gianna Beretta Molla (1922-1962) is often called the "pro-life saint." She died of a uterine tumor

just one week after giving birth to her fourth child, who was present at the ceremony.

A doctor and surgeon, St. Molla had refused to undergo any treatment that may have saved her life but would have put her fetus at risk.

The pope said, "The extreme sacrifice that sealed her life pays witness to how only the person who has the courage to give oneself totally to God and others fulfills oneself."

The canonization of St. Nimatullah Kassab al-Hardini (1808-1858), a 19th-century Lebanese Maronite monk, gave the ceremony a touch of the Middle East.

After the Gospel reading in Italian, St. Peter's Square reverberated with the haunting tones of a Maronite chant. The same passage was then in-

toned in Arabic with the Holy Father chanting, "peace be with you," in Arabic.

St. Hardini was a priest at the monastery in Kfifan who demonstrated a special devotion to the Eucharist and the Blessed Virgin Mary.

He prayed daily for Mary to help protect Lebanon — which underwent two civil wars in his lifetime — and his order, which came under brutal assault just two years after his death.

St. Hardini gave himself completely to God "in a life of great sacrifice, showing that the love of God is the only true source of joy and happiness for mankind," said the pope.

"May his example show us the way and may it especially spark in young people a true desire for God and holiness in order to proclaim the light



Daniele Colariet/CNS

A tapestry depicting St. Gianna Beretta Molla hangs from the front of St. Peter's Basilica during her May 16 canonization Mass.

of the Gospel to the world," he said.

Also canonized May 16 were:

- St. Luigi Orione (1872-1940), Italian priest and founder of the Sons of Divine Providence and the Little Missionary Sisters of Charity.

The pope called him "totally dedicated to Christ and his kingdom," saying his passion for Christ helped him overcome many difficulties and face great physical hardship.

This passion "was the driving force behind his uninhibited altruism and the ever-flowing wellspring of an indestructible hope," he said.

- St. Josep Manyanet Vives (1833-1859), Spanish priest and founder of the Sons of the Holy Family and the Missionary Daughters of the Holy Family of Nazareth.

The pope called him "a true apostle of the family," who "fulfilled both his project of personal sanctity and, heroically, the mission the Holy Spirit entrusted to him."

- St. Annibale Di Francia (1851-1927), an Italian priest who founded the Daughters of Divine Zeal and the Rogationist Fathers.

The pope praised his dedication to promoting prayers for vocations so that other holy men and women would expand his work. Pope John Paul invited today's young people to heed St. Di Francia's call to "fall in love with Jesus Christ."

- St. Paola Elisabetta Cerioli (1816-1865), founder of the men's Congregation of the Holy Father and the Sisters of the Holy Family. She became a religious after her husband and four children died.

The pope said the new saint believed families remained solid when their relationship was founded upon and fostered by common "values of faith and Christian culture."

He said she believed that for children to grow up strong and secure "they needed a family that was healthy and united, strong and stable."

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