

### Hannah Bennett

You may recall that in Aug 2017 a young Sydney woman, Hannah Bennett, (20) was struck with a virulent form of Multiple Sclerosis, causing multiple lesions in brain and spine... and much pain.



Soon after her diagnosis, I invited every member of the Society to consider praying for the healing of Hannah through the intercession of Fr Colin. Many Marists and communities responded immediately and positively.

The Cause postulator, Carlo-Maria Schianchi, wisely advises, 'Invite the people to pray for graces, not miracles'. In our prayers through Fr Colin's intercession, we are seeking healing graces for Hannah. It's up to the Lord how those graces might come.

Earlier this year (March 2018) I sent an update on Hannah's health to provincials and district leaders.

This month (Sep 2018) I visited Hannah and asked her permission to prepare this further update.

### Treatment

Specialist neurologists are offering Hannah the best and latest of regimes to address her condition. Successive and recent MRI scans are showing no further lesions, as well as the healing of some existing ones.

Her present treatment has helped the process of 'myelination' ... rebuilding the 'wrapping' around the nerves which have been attacked by the MS.

*'The pain goes up and down', says Hannah, 'Some days are better than others. Lately, though, there are more good days than bad'.*

### Spirit

Hannah maintains extraordinarily good spirits despite the severity of her illness, and shows much courage in coping with her condition.

She told me that at times she struggles with the anger and bewilderment of 'why me, God?', yet feels hugely supported by Marist prayers. At a time when strengthening her relationship with God is so important to her, Hannah has told me many times, *'I am just so grateful for all the Marist prayers. It is humbling... and so much appreciated'*

Of Hannah's generous spirit, her father told me *'even when she was crying in pain, Han prayed for those with Motor Neurone Disease whose pain is even more intense'*.

With her family, Hannah regularly attends Sunday Mass, usually now of an afternoon at one of the local parishes. Over the years the Bennetts have attended the Marist inner-city church of St Patrick's... which was the my initial point of contact with them after preaching a mission appeal in the early 2000's.

### Uni studies

Since her diagnosis in Aug 2017, and quite remarkably, Hannah has carried on with her studies at Sydney's Macquarie University. Having recently completed a Bachelor Degree in Speech and Hearing Sciences, she is soon to continue with a Bachelor of Psychology course, hoping to extend her studies in Speech Pathology at Masters level in 2019.

The University gives Hannah special consideration at exam times, allowing her to do morning, rather than afternoon, examinations. (Her father, Mark, adds, 'she gets mostly credits and distinctions!')

Hannah attends classes and tutorials three days weekly unless fatigue and/or severe bouts of pain prevent her. She drives herself to uni most times, unless the pain or fatigue gets too much.

### Pass it on....

I ask you to pass this on to your unit members, with Hannah's sincere thanks for their continuing prayers.