

My Lenten Brain Tumor, Our Easter Joy
(part 1)

On the feast day of St. John of God, patron of hospitals and the sick, my doctor informed me that I had a benign brain tumor, and he was sending me right away by ambulance to Via Christi – St. Francis hospital in Wichita. The gospel for that day was about the man ill for 38 years being cured by Jesus: "**'Rise, take up your mat, and walk.'** **Immediately the man became well**" (John 5:8-9).

On the Fourth Friday in Lent, in the afternoon, I had brain surgery to successfully remove the tumor. The first reading taught us that day: "**God will take care of him**" (Wisdom 2:20), as the Father took care of Jesus, of me. I took great strength from the psalmist: "**The Lord is close to the brokenhearted ... from all their distress he rescues them**" (Psalm 34).

On the Fifth Sunday in Lent, in the afternoon, I returned to the Catholic Diocese of Dodge City, my flock. I missed you. I love you. My deepest appreciation, thanks, and gratitude for all your prayers, well-wishes, sacrifices, and thoughts for me during this trial. You and my family and friends were and are great inspirations to me. Your sustained me as our Merciful Lord healed me. The RCIA gospel for that Sunday is Jesus raising His friend Lazarus from the dead: "**And Jesus wept ... see how he loved him ... Lazarus, come out!**" (John 11).

Indeed, Jesus is our Easter Joy, for He promised: "**I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?**" Let us each answer with our whole heart as Martha did: "**Yes, Lord, I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God**" (John 11). My answer is a profound YES.

On Good Friday, my doctor scheduled me to have the 30 staples removed from my head incision (!), and my further healing in the Lord will continue. Be assured of my prayers and love during my recovery. Please give thanks to our many dedicated health care workers who, like St. John of God, devote their lives to this corporal work of mercy. Please today visit, call, text, email or postal mail someone who is ill or grieving. Let Our Mother Mary comfort each of us. Let us reach out with Jesus' healing touch, He is the Divine Physician, the Doctor of our body and soul, who loves us so much! Bishop John B. Brungardt