

My Lenten Brain Tumor, Our Easter Joy  
(Part 2)

I am a self-made man!  
We should pull ourselves up by our own boot straps!  
She doesn't need anybody – she is so independent!

Nonsense. These statements are lies. All false. Don't believe them.

On March 11, I had a successful brain surgery to remove a benign tumor. I am rapidly recovering, thanks to the healing power of the Lord, my excellent health care team, and your faithful prayers. As I lay in the hospital bed before the surgery, God revealed much to me about independence, interdependence, and dependence:

*Independence:*

I tend to want to do things myself. At times, I feel asking for help is a sign of weakness. At times, I don't want to risk rejection. My tendencies toward perfectionism and goal-drivenness is also a problem. This attitude of independence does not work, and it is not what the Lord asks of us. This was profoundly revealed as I lay helpless. What to do? "**My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth**" (Psalm 121:2). We trust in God. We open our heart to a better way, a letting go of self and embracing our Loving Jesus and each other.

*Interdependence:*

God made us to depend on Him and each other. This is Christ's teaching. "**Now you are Christ's Body, and individually parts of it**" (1 Corinthians 12:27). As we mature, we try to do our part to love, to make a better world, to reach out to one another in mutual love, giving and receiving, one with the other. My favorite passages from St. Paul refer to this interdependence, for example: "**Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, as indeed you do**" (1 Thes 5:11).

*Dependence:*

At times, we are totally dependent on another: as infants, while in the hospital, as differently-abled persons, etc. This is a humbling experience. Here we are called to receive. Jesus came to us as a poor boy, depending on Mary and Joseph. He grew and taught us to love. "**He humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross**" (Philippians 2:8). And "**he has been raised from the dead**" (Matthew 28:7) to open the gates of paradise for us. We depend on our Resurrected Savior Jesus Christ.

Let us ask our Risen Jesus this Easter season for a deepening *interdependence*. God is with us – Emmanuel. Let us give and receive from one another. Let us build up the

Body of Christ. Let us encourage one another, especially the least of our sisters and brothers. Jesus is there for us: He loves us so much!

Bishop John B. Brungardt