

Hello, my name is Jamie Dougherty and I've been calling St. John's home for the past couple years.

This year many of us studied the Gospel of John at the home of John and Terry Hare. A few months ago, Professor Hare made a grammatical observation that has been in my mind ever since. The first verse of John 14 is usually translated, "Let not your heart be troubled," or, "Let not your hearts be troubled." Here once more the ambiguities of the English word "your" betray us. As Professor Hare pointed out, "your" is plural here, and yet "heart" is singular. A much better translation might be: "Let not y'all's heart be troubled."

I find this to be a beautiful image. The disciples share one heart.

It reminds me of 1 Corinthians, where Paul says, "Do y'all not know that y'all's body [singular] is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in y'all, whom y'all have from God, and that y'all are not y'all's own?" Our collective body, that is, we as a people, are a temple, a dwelling of the most high. We see this in our reading from 1 Peter: "Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood..."

I don't think it's necessarily wrong to hear either the John or Corinthians verses in a singular, personal way, as there is truth in that too (a win here for English's ambiguity): God's spirit is with me even when I feel completely alone. But when I am alone, I can take even greater hope and strength in knowing I am a member of a larger body: a body that God is building stone by living stone to dwell in. I share one heart with my fellow disciples, and that heart is the heart of Christ. "[We] are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people in order that [we] may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called [us] out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once [we] were not a people, but now [we] are God's people; once [we] had not received mercy, but now [we] have received mercy."

I am someone who has received God's mercy through St. John's, even in this time of isolation. It has reminded me in a powerful way that we share one heart, and it tells me about the nature of that heart. I hope you have experienced that too, through prayer, through phone or video calls, through these meditations, or through financial help. God is at work in and through us, even now. Though so much is uncertain, God has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. And as Jesus says later in this week's Gospel passage: the one who believes in him will also do his works, and "will do even greater things than these."

### **Hear the words of Saint Teresa of Avila:**

*"Christ has no body on earth but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which Christ's compassion for the world is to look out; yours are the feet with which He is to go about doing good; and yours are the hands with which He is to bless us now."*

Pray with me. Jesus, you say that the one who believes in you will also do your works, and will do even greater things than these. Help us to believe that. Give us, your hands and feet, the strength, patience, courage, imagination, and love to do your holy work. Amen.