

Dear People Whom God Loves,

God Embraces Everyone

We can believe this when we remember that God is Love. God is infinite love. Infinite love has no boundaries. God loves every human being, no exceptions. God's care extends to all of creation. It is not limited to people.

For much of this, I am indebted to the book *Body Broken for a Broken People* by Francis J. Moloney, SDB. Pp 135-138

When we look at the way that Jesus shared meals with all kinds of people, we can see that love in a more concrete way. The sharing of meals was the way of showing acceptance and caring. Jesus embraced everyone.

"The tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to him, but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, 'This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.'" Lk 15: 1-2.

Jesus ate with Levi the tax collector. Levi collected other "sinners" to join him in a fellowship meal with Jesus. Levi eventually became one of the apostles. [Levi is the Hebrew form of Matthew.]

Simon, the Pharisee, invited Jesus to eat with him. Remember Simon was among the Pharisees who chastised Jesus for welcoming sinners and eating with them. Jesus ate with his opponent. At the meal, a woman who was well known as a prostitute came in. She bathed Jesus' feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair to receive Jesus' forgiveness.

At another meal with the Pharisees, Jesus urged them to invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind.

Then there was Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector, a notorious sinner. Zacchaeus climbed up a tree to see Jesus when he passed by. Jesus called out to him in front of everyone that he was coming to his house to eat with him.

Finally, there were his apostles. They too were broken and sinful. Jesus shared many meals with them, including the final meal before he died. These broken and sinful apostles were the same ones who would spread the good news of salvation from sin and death.

Smile, God Loves You,

Father Clay

P.S. What I draw from this for myself is that it is essential that I be graced to recognize that I am broken, if I am to spread the Good News.