

SUNDAY, SEPT. 13, 2020

National Bishop Susan
Johnson, Evangelical Lutheran
Church in Canada

+ Pentecost 15 (Lectionary 24)

Exodus 14:19-31 | Psalm 114

or Exodus 15:1b-11, 20-21 |

Romans 14:1-12 |

Matthew 18:21-35



*Lord, if another member
of the church sins against me, how often should I
forgive?* Matthew 18:21

At the 2018 Bishops' Academy, theologian Cynthia Moe-Lobeda reminded us of our call to "neighbour love," to love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself. She went on to say that if God loves the creation, then we must think of the creation as our neighbour.

I am reminded of this when I read today's lesson. What if Peter had rephrased his question to Jesus as "Lord, if a neighbour sins against me, how often should I forgive?" Or, what if the neighbour asking the question was creation asking about us? How many times should creation forgive us for overfishing, deforesting, polluting, endangering species, desertification, commodifying or even just not paying attention? Whether it is seventy-seven times, or seventy times seven, we are past the breaking point.

The 1854 speech attributed to Chief Seattle included these words: "Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. If men spit upon the ground, they spit upon themselves. ... The earth is precious to [God], and to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its creator."

How long until we don't just know it in our heads, but know it in our hearts, and change the way we treat the creation, our neighbour?

Creator, we pray that you would help us touch the earth gently. Turn us from our ways of commodifying the earth and consuming its riches without thought. Amen.

Suggested hymn: **"Touch the Earth Lightly"**
(Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 739)