

Sunday, January 12, 2025

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 43:1-7

The beauty of needing help is that it presents an opportunity for someone else to make a difference in your life. —Unknown

Louise Penny is a Canadian author of mystery novels set in the province of Quebec. The detective and hero of many of her novels is the francophone Chief Inspector Armand Gamache of the Sûreté du Québec. Of him, Penny writes, “Gamache had always held unfashionable beliefs. He believed the light would banish the shadows. That kindness was more powerful than cruelty, and that goodness existed, even in the most desperate places. He believed that evil had its limits.”

In many of her books, the fictional Gamache tells new detectives joining his team that there are four, three-word expressions which one should get used to saying, because if we get comfortable saying them, life will go a whole lot easier for us. They are:

- “I was wrong.”
- “I’m sorry.”
- “I don’t know.”
- “I need help.”

Being wrong. We’re not perfect. We are going to get our facts confused. We’re occasionally going to do the wrong thing. And so on. How much easier is it to simply acknowledge the error of our ways, rather than doggedly defend our foolishness?

Being sorry. It doesn’t hurt to apologize. A good, heartfelt “I’m sorry” can cover a multitude of sins.

Being ignorant. We can’t know everything, can we? Why be so proud as to suggest that we do? When we have no light to shed on a subject, why not keep our mouths shut, or defer to someone who has light to shed?

Being helpless. Everyone at some point in their life needs help. We were born helpless and required the guidance of others for the first 20 years of our lives, and we’re likely to require help for the last 20 years. Why not recognize it, and get on with it? In today’s Bible reading, there’s a great promise to remember when we’re feeling helpless: “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through the fire you shall not be burned” (Isaiah 43:2).

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: O God, help me to humbly recognize my limitations. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

