

Want a tow?

*A homily preached by Jennifer A. Hudson at the Celtic Eucharist, St. Paul's on the Green Episcopal Church, September 22, 2016*

In the name of the God who breathes new life into us. Amen.

A couple of years ago, during a late winter commute home along the Merritt Parkway, conditions that hadn't started out too bad ended up taking a turn for the worse. The temperature dropped and the light dusting of snow thickened and began to freeze. That would have been fine if I'd been driving an SUV, but I was driving a Mustang, and if you know anything about that car, you know that it was not designed for New England winters. As cars ahead of me—most of which were all-wheel drive vehicles—began stopping, starting, sliding and, ultimately, getting stuck, I feared the worst. Then, sure enough, my tires started spinning and my car was immobilized. I sat there for two hours, calling the Department of Transportation (who said they were doing the best they could), calling AAA (who wouldn't tow me in anything other than a breakdown), and calling loved ones (who wouldn't be able to get to me for quite some time). It seemed like I was doomed to spend that evening stranded on the Parkway. Then I remembered the words of Eleanor Roosevelt, "It is better to light a single candle than to curse the darkness." I whispered a prayer, then waited.

You can imagine my elation when the driver of a tow truck signaled for me to roll down my window. "You stuck?" he asked. I nodded. "Want a tow?" I nodded again, vehemently, thankful my prayer had been answered by this stranger who just happened to have been plowing through and taken pity on my situation. Thanks to him, I got home safe and sound.

As with New England snows, we tend to get stuck in various patterns of life—a job we despise, financial difficulty, a powerful addiction, a relationship that has lost its spark. These ruts can leave us feeling dead inside, as though "there is nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:1-11) and no hope of things changing or looking any brighter. Sometimes we get so accustomed to the "same old, same old," no matter how miserable it can make us, that change, even when for the better, can frighten us or seem downright impossible.

A closer look at "what's happening" (or not) around us, even at that which makes us uncomfortable, can motivate us to consider what habits or situations need some revisions or alternatives. Yes, history tends to repeat itself, as Ecclesiastes reminds us. But God later reveals to John in Revelation 21:5, "See, I am making all things new." Jesus is the sun (Son) under which all things are made new. He shows us the path to liberation from the "same old, same old."

From the moment he was born, Jesus heralded change. He sparked a hunger for the truth of "what's happening" or "what's new" within Herod. Likewise, Jesus' teachings and example not only stirs within our hearts a desire for positive change, but shows us that it is possible. When all seems bleak, light can triumph over darkness. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Jesus' Passion, death on the cross, and resurrection, which would reconcile us with

God and give way to a New Covenant. Change, good change, *can* happen. But we must be open to it first.

So the next time we find ourselves in a rut, will we commit to changing our circumstances and, like Herod, try to see God? We might just find Jesus pulling up beside us, saying, "You're stuck? No worries. If you want, I can give you a tow."