**The Rt Revd Dr Flora Winfield, Bishop of Selby, reflects on Luke 24.1-12 for Easter Day, 20th April.**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. ‘But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared.’ This reading in Luke's Gospel takes us immediately into the experience of that first Easter morning. And I invite you to step into your own experience of being outside very early in the day, when it's still dark or dawn is just beginning to break. Perhaps the sky is just becoming light behind the horizon, while the ground is in deep shadow and perhaps damp with dew or rain. The birds might just tentatively be beginning to sing, or perhaps your sound is traffic, or sirens, or distant shouts.

And so, together we walk carefully with the women to the place of Jesus’s burial - perhaps cautiously, maybe fearfully. They don't know what the guards will do, how they will behave, or what they'll find. And as they go in the account in the Gospel of Mark of this same scene, they ask one another, ‘Who will roll the stone away?’ And that's an immediate practical problem for them; the stone is heavy, and they need to get into the tomb. And that stone is also a ton-weight metaphor. Who will enable us to reach the Lord? What are the stones that bar us from reaching him? And where are the stones which you or I could roll away in order to allow others to reach the Lord?

Standing in the wet garden, the women are astonished to see that the stone is already gone, and that there are no barriers. But also, they see that everything else is absolutely changed, utterly not as they expected it to be, because the tomb is empty, and he is risen. And out of their hearts, hollowed out by grief and bereavement, and by witnessing his suffering and death, comes a new song in the early day, as the sun rises, and the birdsong grows louder. A song of undefeated hope and new life and death overcome in resurrection.

And on this Easter morning, we can join that new song. Even if for us the sky is dark and life is troubled and we feel broken, and our world feels broken. In Jesus, we can still sing that song of hope.And we can still know that new life in him is possible. Even against the dark reality of the world around us, each of us, every day can sing that new song of hope and possibility in Christ and see that hope for our broken world.

Lord of all life and power, who through the mighty resurrection of your son, overcame the old order of sin and death to make all things new. Grant that we, being dead to sin and alive to you in Jesus Christ, may reign with him in glory. Amen. Happy Easter.