

On Sunday as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James and Joseph, went to the tomb only to discover that it was empty. An angel helps them to understand that Jesus has been raised from the dead. As they depart to tell the apostles that Jesus wants to meet them in Galilee, they are surprised. Jesus greets them and they respond by embracing his feet.

These are the feet that bear the wounds of the crucified Christ. These are the feet that Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, anointed with a costly perfume. These are the feet that the women intended to anoint after his death with burial spices.

These are the feet of Jesus who bent down to wash the feet of the apostles. We recall that Jesus had said, "What I am doing, you do not understand now, but you will understand later" (13:7). The two Marys see and believe in the resurrection. They might not have understood some of what Jesus had said in other situations, but now seeing Jesus after he has come back from the dead provides new meaning and understanding to conquer any prior questions, doubts or concerns.

It seems an odd detail to say that they embraced his feet. In the Gospel of John, we hear that Mary Magdalene wanted to hold on to Jesus but is cautioned to let go. "Jesus said to her, 'Stop holding on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God''" (Jn 20:17). His ascension will take place immediately following his encounter with Mary on Easter Sunday (Note to Jn 20:17).

When we hear in the Acts of the Apostles that Jesus ascends on the 40<sup>th</sup> day, one may understand it in the sense that his earthly appearances terminated with the final departure on the 40<sup>th</sup> day. Should we be concerned that the scriptures vary in certain details? Think of white light shining through a prism. The light comes from one angle and one source but within the prism it is split into a rainbow of colors. As each biblical author tells us of the resurrection, we see a different hue, a different color, a different way of describing this holy mystery.

One Renaissance artist captures a scene where the feet of Jesus have left the ground. In the picture, one does not see the entire body of Jesus, only the feet. So, one can easily imagine the women embracing the feet of Jesus. They have found him. They are filled with joy. They do not want to let go. Yet, they are obedient to Jesus.

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary are witnesses. The rest of their lives have been transformed by this very moment. Again and again, they will tell others of their encounter with the risen Jesus. Many will come to believe because of their testimony. The prophecies of the Old Testament have been fulfilled. Any doubts that existed with the death of Jesus are wiped away with his resurrection. Only the fool hardy will try to deny it.