Maundy Thursday

The term *maundy* is widely understood to have derived from the words of Christ recorded in chapter 13 of the Gospel of John. After washing his disciples’ feet and predicting his betrayal, Jesus mingled the news of his imminent departure with this encouragement: “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, you must love one another.” The Latin translation of this simple but radical command begins with the word *mandatum*, which is said to have evolved into the French/English *mandé*. Thus we label this key turning point of Holy Week with a term that memorializes the mandate that Christ issued during the Last Supper.

Many Christian communities practice the washing of feet as a way of imitating the actions that Christ performed just before he spoke this command. This happens to be the first year in which Roman Catholics will do so under a new policy that allows priests to administer the centuries-old rite to women as well as to men. In Protestant circles the practice seems to be more varied; for instance, a bride and groom might wash each other’s feet as a liturgical act within their wedding ceremony. The unifying idea is that Christ modeled and commanded a love that is demonstrated in attentive acts of service that refresh the lives and restore the spirits of his beloved.

This particular Maundy Thursday comes during a difficult season for many of us at Calvin College. We are working harder than ever, and in our busyness we have become increasingly isolated. We are bending under the pressures of prioritization decisions, and we can barely find energy to think about improving our teaching or furthering our scholarship. We are coping with health crises and family tragedies, and it takes all our strength just to make it through the workday. We are mourning the impending departures of beloved colleagues, and we hardly dare imagine what we would do if we were in their dusty shoes.

This Sunday will bring another Easter, but next week we’ll be back in the muck. While this outlook may be starkly realistic, it doesn’t have to be pessimistic. Admitting that we are not in pristine condition is not the same as devaluing our eternal hope or wallowing in complaint. At the Last Supper, dirty feet were the bare facts of life that provided opportunities for acts of love. Perhaps the most remarkable fact is that Jesus left his disciples with a mandate to seek out those very opportunities. And so we must ask, what might foot washing look like in our community today?

*Matt Walhout, dean for research and scholarship*

Midterm Progress Reports

Midterm progress reports for students on academic probation and in the Access program were e-mailed to faculty on March 22. Please complete these reports with specific feedback on each student by March 30. The reports aid retention and learning as they help academic counselors accurately work with the noted student. Thank you for the time and effort you put into completing these reports.

From the Faculty Activity Reports


Be sure to fill out your Faculty Activity Reports regularly, and don’t forget to indicate FEN-related activities. If you have questions regarding the process, see the FAQ page.

Student Writing Prizes

The Rhetoric Across the Curriculum (RAC) Program is pleased to announce a new Science Division Writing Prize to be offered for the first time this year. Open to all Calvin students, the competition will award $200 to “the best essay about a scientific topic or issue aimed at a general audience.” The deadline is April 15. The long-standing writing prizes in Dutch Studies, Gender Studies, History, Philosophy, and Religion also have deadlines of April 15 or later. Details and submission guidelines for all these writing prizes are available on the RAC website. Please remind your students about these prizes and encourage them to submit their best work.

Coming Up on Campus

Monday, March 28

• No classes
• Faculty Senate meeting. 7:00 p.m., Hoogenboom 280

Tuesday, March 29

• Chapel. “Unbelievable.” 10:00 a.m., Chapel

Wednesday, March 30

• Chapel. Sounds of Gospel Worship. 10:00 a.m., Chapel
• Lecture. Bruce Friedrich (Good Food Institute), “The Future of Protein-Blending Markets and Food Technology to Solve Some of the World’s Biggest Problems.” 3:30 p.m., Chapel Undercroft
• Psychology lecture. David Nyenhuis, “The Neuropsychologist’s Role in Determining Decisional Capacity.” 3:30 p.m., SB301

Thursday, March 31

• Chapel. Taizé with Stephanie Sandberg and Karen Saupe. 10:00 a.m., Chapel
• Chemistry seminar. Brandon Burkhart (U of Illinois), “Mining Microbial Genomes for Novel Antibiotics.” 11:30 a.m., Science Building 010
• CALL noontime lecture. Len Vander Zee, “From the Big Bang to the New Creation: God’s Big Six Billion Year Long Story of Creation and Redemption.” 12:00 noon, CFAC recital hall
• Lecture. Bruce Friedrich (Good Food Institute), “The Kingdom of God Is within You: Diet as an Invocation of Christ.” 3:30 p.m., Meeter Center lecture hall

Friday, April 1

• Chapel. James Lee with the student worship team
• Biology seminar. Cornelius Boerkoel (U of British Columbia), “Genetic Medicine and the Defense of Well-Being.” 1:30 p.m., Science Building 010