Dear Parents,

Thank you to all of you for sending your daughters to us and providing them with the resources needed for an education here at Brigidine. The Brigidine River is flowing again; a good deal of our energy has gone into the preparation of our Year Seven for efficacious educational use of their laptops and it was exciting for staff and students when finally the “Bootcamp” was over and the first lesson of secondary school could begin.

I hope that you heard good things about our opening school Mass which was held as it is every year on the Feast of St Brigid, 1st of February. We certainly filled every corner of our parish church and as always, the music was exceptional and Fr Hearn’s homily pitched accurately for our students’ understanding. Many girls from the HSC class of 2015 were present to receive high achiever awards and to listen to the 2015 Dux, Lucy Kelley, give an outstanding speech of advice and reflection about the HSC experience.

UPCOMING EVENTS

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19
Yr 7 Parent Meet & Greet
6.00pm – 8.00pm

THURSDAY, MARCH 3
College Open Afternoon
2.30 – 6.00pm

FRIDAY, MARCH 4
College Swimming Carnival

BRIGIDINE BASICS
- Girls leave class at 3pm but the School reserves the right to require the girls to stay until 3.20pm
- Every girl is to be at school by 8.30am at least.
- Teaching commences at 8.40am
- Supervision of girls begins at 8.20am. Girls should be in either the Main Quad or the Canteen Quad.
- Parents should not drop and pick up daughters in Aeolia Street. This causes dangerous traffic for the students.
I always come away from this Mass of St Brigid invigorated by gratitude at being a part of a tradition of women and justice going back to the fifth century. It is very good for the wellbeing of the girls to feel embraced by the strong inspirational ideas and communities which their Brigidine education gives them.

**Girls Leaving in the Afternoon**
The school day concludes at Brigidine at 3.20. Sometimes the girls will come out of homeroom at 3.05 and they can get an early bus. Most often there is a teacher to see or a teacher wishes to see them or they need to go to the library or the Year Coordinator has called a special meeting. There is also a short detention time for minor misdemeanours at this time which a girl may be required to attend.

There is supervision here at school until 3.20 so if parents are picking up daughters then arrange to meet them after 3.20. We ask parents not to organise after school appointments from 3.00. Again please do not pick your daughters up in Aeolia Street as when the girls are exiting the short street choked with cars makes it all so much more dangerous. Please read our Assistant Principal’s (Ms Taylor) section in this newsletter carefully.

**Holiday Reading**
“How can you believe in a loving God when there is so much suffering in the world?” This is “the question of questions for biblical faith” which either stalls faith or the search for an answer propels personal faith forward. The question is quite normal in the secondary RE classroom and the answer is found in reflection on the kind of God each of us believes in. I have great admiration for the thinking and writing of Rabbi Lord Jonathon Sacks once Chief Rabbi of Great Britain. Over the holidays I read his article, “Of What was Moses Afraid?” which comes at the idea of human suffering and God’s work in the world in a way that I found intriguing and helpful to my own struggle with suffering. The article is included for you at the end of this newsletter.

May 2016, like any year, a year of challenge and opportunity, be one when we recognise many blessings and find much joy in the relationships of our community.

May Brigid bless the place wherein you dwell.

**Ms K Edmondson**
Principal
FROM THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Welcome back to all our parents in Years 8 – 12 and a special welcome to all our new parents in Year 7 along with those who have begun in other Years. This newsletter is but one place in which you will find information regarding what is going on at the College. You will see below an outline of College procedures that will effect both you and your daughter/s on a daily basis.

We ask for all parents support in ensuring these procedures are followed. It makes it very difficult when parents ‘cover’ for their daughters when they have not followed the rules/procedures of the College. As well as academic learning, it is vitally important that our girls learn that all actions have consequences and they must think through and take responsibility for their own actions and decisions.

THE DAILY STRUCTURE 2016

School finishes at 3:20pm. There will be days when the girls are dismissed at 3pm however, there will also be days when the girls are required to stay till 3:20pm for whole school assemblies, year group assemblies, detentions, study, to see a teacher etc...

**Days when the girls will definitely be here till 3:20pm are below:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Group</th>
<th>Day / Timetable Day</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>Every Tuesday (Day 2/7)</td>
<td>Whole school study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7, 8, 11</td>
<td>Monday B (Day 6)</td>
<td>Year Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>9, 10, 12</td>
<td>Thursday B (Day 8)</td>
<td>Year Meeting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All school special buses arrive after 3:26pm.

USE OF SENTRAL

All parents and students have access to the College’s [SENTRAL Student/Parent Portal](#). Please ensure you utilise this resource on a weekly basis. The girls MUST access SENTRAL on a daily basis. School bulletins will be posted on SENTRAL as well as the girls’ timetable and attendance.

If you do not yet have access to a SENTRAL access account please register using this [Sentral Portal Registration Link](#) on the website. **Note that approval of your registration may be next business day**

Any problems with registration or accessing existing Sentral accounts:

Please email: michael.rawlings@syd.catholic.edu.au
Existing Sentral Parent Portal Account Holders

Parents, if you have already registered for SENTRAL remember to use the email address which you used for the registration as your username together with the password you set up to access the portal. You can access the portal via the link at the top of our College Website or via the following link: http://sentral.bcrandwick.catholic.edu.au/portal/login

CANVAS – LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

All students in Years 7 – 11 have now been registered to use the College’s new Learning Management System – Canvas. Canvas will serve as a diary for the girls, as well as a place for them manage their learning in each subject. All assessment task dates will be uploaded to Canvas so girls will receive notification of what is due and when on their calendar. This information can be synced to their google calendar and other electronic calendars they may use on a daily basis. Girls also have the option of receiving task notifications and due dates on their mobile phone.

Parents will be given access to Canvas in Term 1. You will be able to observe what your daughter is doing, what tasks she has and when they are due. Please keep an eye out in following newsletters on how to register for Canvas.

DATES TO NOTE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/2/2016</td>
<td>• Ash Wednesday</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/2/2016</td>
<td>• Year 12 Reflection Day</td>
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<td>19/2/2016</td>
<td>• Year 7 Parent Meet &amp; Greet – All parents welcome (6-8pm)</td>
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<td>23/2/2016</td>
<td>• Year 11 Leadership Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>26/2/2016</td>
<td>• Public Speaking – Round 1</td>
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<td>29/2/2016</td>
<td>• Year 12 Hospitality Restaurant take over - Pinocchio’s</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/3/2016</td>
<td>• College Open Afternoon (2:30 - 6:00pm) – Girls dismissed at 1:05pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/3/2016</td>
<td>• College Swimming Carnival – Botany Pool (8am)</td>
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<td>14/3 – 15/3</td>
<td>• Year 7 Camp</td>
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<tr>
<td>18/3 – 1/4</td>
<td>• Year 12 Exams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
 REMINDERS OF COLLEGE RULES/PROCEDURES

PROCEDURE FOR EARLY LEAVE
1. Student requests to leave early must be accompanied by a note, stating clearly the time and reason for the absence, signed by a parent / guardian
2. Students must have this note signed by the Year Coordinator prior to the end of recess (11am) on the day of early leave
3. At the time that the student is to leave the school she is to show her signed note to her teacher
4. The student must report to the front office with her note before she leaves the school
5. An early leave ticket will be printed and must be kept by the student who will give to their Homeroom teacher the following day
6. Students are to remain inside the College grounds when waiting to be picked up by a parent / guardian
7. All girls in Years 7 – 9 MUST be picked up by an adult
   - We would ask parents/guardians for their support in this matter as it is a significant duty of care risk when girls forge notes and leave the College without parents or the school knowing where they are.

If a student is late to school without a valid reason, she will have a punctuality detention that afternoon for 20 mins between 3:00 – 3:20pm or 2:40 – 3:00pm (Thurs)

Please make appointments outside school hours 8:35 – 3:20pm

PUNCTUALITY
All students who are late to school, without a valid reason, or parent notification, will be placed on an afternoon detention between 3:00 - 3:20pm that afternoon. If a student does not arrive in time for Period 1 at 8.40am, she is regarded as being late. She must report to the office to be signed in. Girls do not need to call in themselves if they are on a bus and it is late. They should report to the front office as soon as they arrive and explain the situation.
SICKNESS
Parents must call in the morning of their daughter’s absence due to illness. It is not appropriate for students to call in their own absence illness, no matter what Year they are in. If this occurs it will be regarded as an unexplained absence.

UNIFORM EXPECTATIONS
- Girls’ summer dresses and kilts must be touching the floor when a girl kneels with her shoulders back. This is the minimum length.
- Shoes are traditional black leather lace up with low flat heels. All variations (e.g. buckles, high heels, ripple soles and sport shoes) are not allowed
- Hairstyles are to be well groomed, simple, unsophisticated and appropriate for a school student. Long hair is to be tied back. Hair must be a natural colour with no obvious streaking or tinting. Ribbons or scrunchies are to be navy blue, white, yellow or bottle green and any hair accessories such as combs are to be navy or tortoise-shell in colour
- Sports uniform is NOT worn to and from school unless a student has a scheduled sports lesson on that day
- Coloured nail polish is not to be worn with the uniform. Only clear nail polish may be worn
- NO Makeup is to be worn with the uniform
- The College school bag is the only permitted bag allowed
- If gloves or scarves are worn in winter they are to be navy blue
- If it is raining girls may wear a plain navy or bottle green spray jacket – no insignia at all. The College has a Navy Spray Jacket for purchase at the uniform shop (all Year 7 students must wear this spray jacket only)
- Those students studying Hospitality are expected to wear their Hospitality Uniform during Hospitality ONLY
- Girls NOT in correct uniform are required to attend a uniform detention on the day of the infringement, between 3:00 – 3:20pm or 2:40 – 3:00pm (Thurs).

JEWELLERY
The following are the ONLY items of jewellery allowed to be worn with the school uniform. Any other items worn may be confiscated for breach of the uniform rules.
- One plain and matching gold or silver stud or sleeper in each ear lobe
- One watch
Students who have additional piercings done during term or school holidays will NOT be permitted to breach these rules. Any breach of the uniform rules will incur a uniform detention as stated above.

- Students who choose to wear non-regulation items of jewellery will have these items confiscated. They will be stored in the College safe and returned to the student at the end of that school term
- The College fully supports the NSW Cancer Council’s campaign to encourage students to wear protective headwear. A College cap is available. No other headwear will be accepted, including on sports day
- No visible tattoos
- No writing or graffiti is to appear on any item of the College Uniform.

**NO RINGS**
**NO NECKLACES**
**NO NOSE PIERCINGS**

**MOBILE PHONES**
At Brigidine we acknowledge that the use of mobile phones is widely accepted in today’s society. We understand that for reasons of safety outside of school hours, students may be required to carry a mobile phone.

**CONDITIONS**
- Mobile phones will remain switched off, may not be used to contact other people and should not be visible during school hours 8.40am – 3.20pm.
- Students are not to send text messages to other mobile phones during school hours or receive text messages, including to parents
- Mobile phones are not to be brought into any examinations or assessment tasks
- Due to the Privacy Act, mobile phones are not to be used to take and / or transmit still video images
- **The College accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage of mobile phones**
- Students in breach of any of the above conditions will have their phone confiscated. The mobile phone can be collected by the student at 3.20pm from the office
- **Students are not permitted to contact their parents using their mobile phones during school hours. If they are sick, then they are to see their Year Coordinator or go directly to the Office.**
- Parents are encouraged not to ring or text their daughters during school time. If parents need to contact their daughters during school time, then they are asked to do this through the Office.

Brigid Taylor
Assistant Principal
SPORTS DEPARTMENT NEWS

TUESDAY TOUCH
Tuesday Touch commenced on the 2nd of February. For further games please make sure that you arrive on time and have the correct uniform.

Good luck to all teams and please note the following dates.

1. ROUND 7  2ND FEBRUARY
2. ROUND 8  9TH FEBRUARY
3. ROUND 9  16TH FEBRUARY
4. ROUND 10  23RD FEBRUARY
5. SEMI FINALS  1ST MARCH
6. GRAND FINAL  8TH MARCH
7. BACK UP GRAND FINAL  15TH MARCH

GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT NEWS

YEAR 12 GREAT BARRIER REEF TRIP
At the end of last year the Senior Geography class set off for a week of fieldwork in Far North Queensland. The girls spent the week doing a range of fieldwork activities in two different environments: rainforests and coral reefs.

Activities undertaken on the trip included 2 days on the reef which consisted of three – four dives where the girls explored the reef and conducted coral identification and general reef assessments.

We travelled up to the Daintree where the girls spent a night deep in the rainforests and got to experience all the wildlife that this involves. Whilst up there, the girls conducted quadrant assessments of sections of the rainforest as well as attempting zip-lining through the top canopy!

As well as this, we had day trips to Mossman Gorge and Kanandra, swam in fresh water lakes situated on top of now dormant, ancient volcanoes and got a taste of the tourism industry in Cairns and Port Douglas.

The girls thoroughly enjoyed the trip and got to experience two ecosystems which are at risk of being severely affected by human intervention.

Mr Campbell and Ms Dawson
ARE YOU INTERESTED IN ROBOTICS OR DESIGNING AND PROGRAMMING YOUR OWN VIDEO GAME??

STEM club will be up and running from Wednesday 17\textsuperscript{th} February (Week 4) from 3pm-4pm in DL2. If you are interested please email Ms Watson Jones (k.watsonjones@syd.catholic.edu.au) by 10\textsuperscript{th} February.

Not sure what STEM is all about?? Check this out. Here are some of things we achieved in 2015........
VISUAL ARTS DEPARTMENT NEWS

YEAR 7 SCHOOL UNIFORMS AND PAINT IN THE VISUAL ARTS CLASSROOM
Welcome to 2016 and another exciting year of making art at Brigidine College. Year 7 students have newly purchased uniforms. Years 7-10 will shortly commence painting in the Visual Arts Classroom. There are aprons in the art rooms and every girl is responsible to wear an apron to protect her school uniform.

If a student gets paint on the uniform we have a eucalyptus wool wash we use with a nail brush to remove the paint immediately. The manufacturer states it can be removed with just hot water. We have conducted experiments and found hot water sets the paint. Blue seems to be the most difficult colour to remove, especially on the white blouses.

The Visual Arts Department is keen for the girls to enjoy painting while still protecting their uniforms.

OBSERVATIONAL DRAWING IN THE VISUAL ARTS CLASSROOM
Every class in the Visual Arts spends the first 3 minutes of the lesson completing an observational drawing in the back of their Visual Arts Process Diary. Girls early to class have more than 3 minutes. If we are studying Art Criticism or Art History girls still have 3 minutes of drawing. The objects change every cycle and we are continually looking for objects with interesting shapes. Donations are always accepted and we often drop into St Vincent De Paul to see what is new. Pictured is an awesome teapot donated by Mrs Dawson.

This exercise can be viewed as merely building drawing skills. Eye hand coordination is developed and so are observational skills. The importance of this activity is in the brain. The power is in imaging, as a device for understanding and remembering complex information. Both hemispheres of the brain are literally given an ‘aerobic workout’ as the dominant left side of the brain forces the right side of the brain to work. I am not inventing the wheel here, but riding qualitative research made 30 years ago.

As the Visual Arts Coordinator, I want to develop and celebrate the creative potential of every student in the Visual Arts. As we commence a new year the Visual Arts department will renew its enthusiasm to develop every student’s potential.

Ms Deirdre Brennan
Visual Arts Coordinator
SECOND HAND UNIFORMS FOR SALE

Senior Uniform
Size 6 Kilt $20
Size 12 Blazer $50
Both in good condition and have been dry cleaned.
Contact Monica 0401 701 111

Senior items for Sale in excellent condition
1x Senior Blazer Size 16 $50
1x Senior Pullover Size 10-12 $35
1x Senior Skirt Size 10-12 $40
Please contact: Stephanie Fenech on 0422071618

UNIFORM NEED ALTERING?
Too long, too tight, elastic not right? I have over 50 years of experience in sewing and doing alterations and now I do them for my Grandson’s uniforms! If you need prompt, affordable help with making those uniforms fit just right, please call me. I can also come to the uniform shop if you need help with fitting. Tina 9399 8009 or 0410 540 084
Of what was Moses afraid?

Jonathan Sacks

This reflection owes its genesis to my teacher, Rabbi Nachum Rabinovitch. One of the great Maimonidean scholars of our time, he taught us, his students, that Torah leadership demands the highest intellectual and moral courage. He did this in the best way possible: by personal example. The following thoughts, which are his, are a small indication of what I learned from him — not least that Torah is, among other things, a refusal to give easy answers to difficult questions.

It was, in its way, the most fateful encounter in Jewish history. Moses, a fugitive in Midian, is tending his flocks; it is the slow movement in the symphony of his life. His first taste of leadership was not a happy one. He had intervened to protect an Israelite slave from being beaten by an Egyptian taskmaster. The next day he tried to bring peace between two Israelites who were having a quarrel. Their reaction was indignant. "Who appointed you as a prince and a leader over us?" He had not yet thought of becoming a leader, yet already his leadership was being challenged. It was a taste of things to come.

Realising that his intervention the previous day had already become known, Moses escapes from Egypt and finds refuge in Midian where his true identity is unknown. Jethro's daughters, whom he rescued from rough treatment at the hands of local shepherds, tell their father that "An Egyptian man saved us." Moses looks, speaks, and dresses like an Egyptian. He names one of Jethro's daughters and settles down to the life of a shepherd, quiet, anonymous, and far from Pharaoh and the Israelites.

Torah is, among other things, a refusal to give easy answers to difficult questions.

Yet his memories do not leave him alone. They come into sudden focus as he is tending his sheep and his eye catches sight of a strange phenomenon:

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of G-d.

There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush.

Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight-why the bush does not burn up."

When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, G-d called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am."

"Do not come any closer," G-d said, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." Then he said, "I am the G-d of your father, the G-d of Abraham, the G-d of Isaac and the G-d of Jacob."

At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at G-d.

G-d tells him that the moment has come. He has heard the cries of the Israelites. In response both to their cries and to the promise he made with the patriarchs, He is about to bring them out of slavery and He calls on Moses to lead them. The drama of the exodus is about to begin.

One sentence in this passage intrigued the sages: "At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at G-d."

They noticed a parallel between these words and a later passage, after the golden calf, when Moses comes down from the mountain having secured forgiveness for the people, and new tablets to replace those he had broken when he first saw the calf. The text reads:

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the Lord. When
Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him.

On this, the sages commented:

Rabbi Samuel ben Nachmani said in the name of Rabbi Jonathan: in reward for three [pious acts], Moses was privileged to receive three [forms of reward]. In reward for "and Moses hid his face," he was given a radiant face. In reward for "he was afraid," he merited that "they were afraid to come near him." In reward for "to look upon G-d," he merited that "he sees the form of the Lord."

It is a lovely idea. Moses, who came closer to G-d than any other human being before or since, took on some of the characteristics of G-d himself — not that he became G-d-like (Moses, like every other figure in the Hebrew Bible, remains human, not divine) but that his face shone from the encounter.

One detail in the sages’ commentary, however, is strange. The first two rewards are straightforward — a kind of measure for measure. Because he hid his face, his face became radiant. Because he was awestruck by the burning bush, he became awe-inspiring (the Israelites were "afraid to come near him"). But what about the third — because he was afraid to look at G-d, he was rewarded by seeing G-d? Either it is right or wrong to "look at G-d." If it is right, why was Moses afraid? And if it is wrong, why was he later rewarded with something that should not have happened?

One question, according to the sages, troubled Moses. "Why do the innocent suffer?" Why is there evil in the world? Moses burned with a sense of justice. When he saw a slave beaten, or two people fighting, or young women being roughly treated by shepherds, he intervened. Later, when his mission to Pharaoh initially made things worse for the Israelites, not better, he said to G-d: "O Lord, why have you brought trouble to this people... You have not rescued your people at all." Moses belonged to the tradition of Abraham who said to G-d, "Shall the Judge of all the earth not do justice?"

This is the question of questions for biblical faith. Paganism then, like secularism now, had no such doubt. Why should anyone expect justice in the world? The G-ds fought. They were indifferent to mankind. The universe was not moral. It was an arena of conflict. The strong win, the weak suffer, and the wise keep far from the fray. If there is no G-d or (what amounts to the same thing) many G-ds, there is no reason to expect justice. The question does not arise.

But, for biblical faith, it does. G-d, the supreme power of powers, is just. Was this not why he chose Abraham in the first place, so that he would teach his children and his household to "keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just"? Why then do the good suffer, while evil men prosper? It is a question that reverberates through the centuries, in Jeremiah, the book of Job, ancient rabbinic midrash, the kinos ("laments") of the Middle Ages, and post-Holocaust literature. It was this question that stayed with Moses and gave him no rest. Why are the Israelites enslaved? What wrong did they do to warrant it? Why is the brutal regime of Egypt so strong? Where is the justice in the world?

Pain, harm, suffering are evils. Yet there are circumstances in which we make our peace

Why then do the good suffer, while evil men prosper?... Where is the justice in the world?
There are times when we must silence our most human instincts if we are to bring about good in the long run.

with them — when we know that they are necessary for some good. To be a parent is to be troubled by the cry of a child in distress, yet we willingly give a child medicine, and put up with its cries, when we know it will cure the illness from which the child is suffering. A surgeon must, at a certain point, treat the patient on the operating table as an object rather than a person, for were it otherwise he could not perform the surgery. A political leader may have to make a decision that will have a disastrous impact on some people — thrown out of work as a result of stringent economic policies, even killed on the battlefield as the consequence of a decision to go to war. One who shirks from these choices because of a strong sense of compassion may be a good human being but a wholly inadequate leader, because the long term result of a failure to make tough choices may be far worse. There are times when we must silence our most human instincts if we are to bring about good in the long run.

It was just this — my teacher argued — of which Moses was afraid. If he could “look at the face of G-d,” if he could understand history from the perspective of heaven, he would have to make his peace with the suffering of human beings. He would know why pain here was necessary for gain there; why bad now was essential to good later on. He would understand the ultimate justice of history.

That is what Moses refused to do, because the price of such knowledge is simply too high. He would have understood the course of history from the vantage point of G-d, but only at the cost of ceasing to be human. How could he still be moved by the cry of slaves, the anguish of the oppressed, if he understood its place in the scheme of things, if he knew that it was necessary in the long run? Such knowledge is divine, not human — and to have it means saying goodbye to our most human instincts: compassion, sympathy, identification with the plight of the innocent, the wronged, the afflicted and oppressed. If to “look at the face of G-d” is to understand why suffering is sometimes necessary, then Moses was afraid to look — afraid that it would rob him of the one thing he felt in his very bones, the thing that made him the leader he was: his anger at the sight of evil which drove him, time and again, to intervene in the name of justice.

Moses was afraid to “look at the face of G-d.” But there are two primary names of G-d in the Bible: Elokim and Hashem (the so-called tetragrammaton, the four-letter name). Elokim, say the sages, refers to G-d’s attribute of justice. Hashem refers to his compassion, his mercy, his kindness. At the burning bush, Moses was afraid to look at Elokim. His reward, years later, was that he saw “the form of Hashem.” He understood G-d’s compassion. He did not understand — he was afraid to understand — G-d’s attribute of justice. He preferred to fight injustice as he saw it, than to accept it by seeing its role in the script of eternity. When it came to kindness and mercy, Moses was inspired by heaven. But when it came to justice, Moses preferred to be human than divine.

So it was throughout history. Jews, however deeply they believed in G-d and divine providence, never made their peace with what seemed to them to be injustice. Albert Einstein spoke of the “almost fanatical love of justice” that made him “thank his stars” that he belonged to the Jewish tradition.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the book of Job. Job protests the injustice of his fate. His comforters tell him he is wrong. G-d is just, therefore there is a reason for the tragedies that have befallen him. Throughout the long dialogue we sense that Job is on the brink of blasphemy, that it is his comforters who speak the truth. Yet at the conclusion of the book our expectations are suddenly overturned. G-d says to Eliphaz and his colleagues: “I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken as you ought about me, as my servant Job has done.”

It is an astonishing volte-face. Better the protests of Job than the acceptance of fate on the part of his friends. Yes, there is an ultimate justice in the affairs of mankind. But we may not aspire to such knowledge — not because we cannot (because, being human, our minds are too limited, our horizons too short) but because we morally must not, for we would then accept evil and not fight against it. G-d wants us to be human not divine. He seeks our protest against evil, our passion for justice, our refusal to come to terms with a world in which the innocent suffer and the evil have power.

It is that refusal — born not out of a lack of faith but precisely the opposite, the conviction that G-d wants us to be active in pursuit of justice — that drove Abraham, Jeremiah and Job; that drove successive generations of those inspired by the Bible to fight slavery, tyranny, poverty and disease; that moved us to become G-d’s partners in the work of redemption. Faced with the opportunity to understand the troubling aspects of history from the vantage-point of G-d, Moses was afraid to look. He was right, and for this he was rewarded. G-d does not want us to understand the suffering of the innocent but to fight for a world in which the innocent no longer suffer.

To that, Moses dedicated his life. Can we, his disciples, do less?

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks is a global religious leader, philosopher and the author of more than 25 books.

This article was originally published on www.rabbisacks.org on 27 December 2007 and is reprinted here with permission.