

This generation seeks a sign, but no sign will be given it except the sign of Jonah (Luke 11:29-30). Jonah was the disobedient prophet who rejected the mission of going to the Ninevites and telling them they were doomed. He tried to sail as far away from Nineveh as possible. A storm arose. His pagan shipmates recognized he was the source of the problem and tossed him overboard. Jonah was swallowed up in the belly of a whale for three days until he was spit up onshore. Jonah finally got the point and went on to carry out his mission. More amazing than the reluctant prophet's turn around was the response of the Ninevites. They heard the preaching of Jonah and 120,000 souls turned on a dime to repent. The Lord was duly impressed, and the city and all its inhabitants were spared from any harm.

In the generation of Jesus, there was a sign that was greater than that of Jonah. After being brutally executed and dying, Jesus was buried in the tomb three days. On the third day he rose from the dead. What greater sign could there be that Jesus was the promised Messiah? He conquered sin and death to set us free. Sadly, at the time that Jesus lived, he was deeply disappointed in the generation he preached to. The Ninevites were universally responsive to the sign in their generation. But this was not the case among the Pharisees and scribes who did not believe and continued to plot evil against Jesus.

Every generation seeks a sign. And every generation is discontent with all of the signs that are already present. The sun rises each morning. The light created at the dawn of time in the Book of Genesis helps sustain our life today. The beauty of a sunset that takes our breath away is a sign that God is the supreme artist. The beauty of a smile on a child's face is a sign of God. An answered prayer is a sign of God. The rebirth of a soul after the sacrament of reconciliation and the forgiveness of sins is a sign. The healing of an individual whether by medical science or by miracles are also signs. "Blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear" (Mt 13:6).

What sign is there for this millennial generation? I'm glad you asked that question. On Saturday, Carlo Acutis was beatified. He is the first millennial to be declared blessed. Born in London in 1991, he loved Super Mario and Pokemon. But his love for God was much greater. For him, the greatest sign of the presence of God was Jesus in the Eucharist. Since his young childhood, he had his gaze turned to Jesus. He understood the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist and he wanted to share that good news with other. He often said, "the Eucharist is my highway to heaven."

God calls us to be a visible sign in the world. He looks to us to share the good news, to love our neighbor in need and to reach out to the poor and the hungry. Carlo felt a strong need to help people discover that God is close to us and that it is beautiful to be with him. Carlo taught himself computer programming and used the Internet to help people recognize the presence of God. He created websites that catalogued the world's eucharistic miracles and Marian apparitions. He got it. He saw the signs, and he wanted to share the truth about God with others. "I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike" (Mt 11:25).

Carlo died of leukemia (in 2006) 14 years ago at the age of 15 on the 12th of October in Milan, Italy. Pope Francis spoke about Carlo in his Angelus address this weekend. Carlo was a fifteen-year-old in love with Jesus. "He did not settle into comfortable in action, but grasped the needs of his time because in the weakest he saw the face of Christ ... his witness shows today's young people that true happiness is found by putting God first and serving him in our brothers, especially the least."

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- Pope Francis says Blessed Carlo Acutis is a model for young People to put God first.
- Beatification of Carlo Acutis: The first millennial to be declared Blessed.
- Who was Carlo Acutis? A CNA Explainer