

[Spirituality](#)
[Pencil Preaching](#)



by Pat Marrin

[View Author Profile](#)
patrickjmarrin@gmail.com.

[Join the Conversation](#)

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. [Learn more](#)

February 12, 2023

[Share on Facebook](#)[Share on Twitter](#)[Email to a friend](#)[Print](#)



“Amen, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation” (Mark 8:12).

[Gn 4:1-15, 25; Mk 8:11-13](#)

Some Pharisees were skeptical of Jesus, and so they asked him to give them a sign to prove that he was from God. They wanted certainty; he invited them to take the path of discernment and faith.

When Jesus was presented in the Temple as a baby, his mother was told that he would be a sign of contradiction destined for the rise and fall of many in Israel. It was an ominous foretelling, for the final sign given to an unbelieving world was the sign of the cross.

In another passage during his ministry, Jesus spoke of the sign of Jonas. The son of man would go down into the belly of a whale for three days, understood as his death and resurrection.

The great “messianic secret” in Mark’s gospel addressed what many in Israel expected -- a majestic, powerful figure to restore God’s rule with great signs and wonders, rooting out sin and punishing sinners. Instead, Jesus dies for sinners and invites everyone to reshape the world with justice, reconciliation and love.

What sign would reassure us that we are doing God’s will? We want hints and small rewards along the way to be sure. But what we have are ordinary days and regular tasks and responsibilities that hold our lives together in our families and communities. If we do these faithfully over time, we will see God everywhere.

The Hebrew word *tikkun* means to stitch up a tear. If we want the world to be mended, we are invited to take our needle and thread each day to repair the small places where the fabric of friendship or society is worn and rent. The call of St. Francis of Assisi was to “repair the church.” He set out to do that stone by stone.

Imagine millions of tailors, seamstresses and builders going forth each day to mend the world. Is not their collective gift sign enough that God is with us, in the world and in our hearts? Let us join them in mending our divisions and repairing the church.