

All Will Be Well
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Every week when we celebrate this Eucharist, we profess our faith that Christ will return at the end of the ages. For example, in a few moments we will recite the creed, and toward the end of the creed we will say, “*He will come again* in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.” After the consecration, we will proclaim the mystery of faith: “When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim your death, O Lord, *until you come again.*” In the Eucharistic prayer I will pray, “Therefore, O Lord, as we celebrate the memorial of the saving Passion of your Son, his wondrous Resurrection and Ascension into heaven, *and as we look forward to his second coming, ...*” Finally, in the Lord’s Prayer we will ask, “Thy kingdom come,” and I will conclude the prayer by saying, “Deliver us, Lord, from every evil ... *as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.*” At the heart of the Eucharist we celebrate each week, then, there is a vibrant hope and a firm conviction that Christ will come again. Just as he once came in history, so he will come at the end of time. And when he comes a second time, it will be in the power and glory of God to judge the living and the dead.

But what does it mean to say that Christ will come again? Will Christ come again? After all, we have been waiting for two thousand years, and Christ has not returned. So why do we continue to proclaim, week after week, that Christ will come again? What difference does it make to our day to day life whether or not Christ will come again?

When I taught at the university, I would ask my students if they really believed that Christ would come again. Nearly all of them would respond yes. But then, when I asked them if they thought that Christ would return in *their* lifetime, they sheepishly said no. And so I concluded that while they believed that Christ would come again, they did not understand what this meant for their daily lives. What does it mean to say that Christ will come again? What difference does it make in our lives to profess that Christ will come again?

Let’s begin with what we do *not* know. We do not know *when* Christ will come again. We do know *how* Christ will come again. Jesus himself teaches us this at the end of today’s gospel, when he says, “Of that day or hour, no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.” When and how Christ will return is known only to God. What we *do* know, however, and what we proclaim, is that in God’s way, in God’s time, Christ will come again in a way that will utterly astound us. And when he comes, all things will be made right. Christ will deal with evil in a final and definitive way. All the injustices of our lives and of history will be revealed. And in the end, for those who believe in Christ, all will be well.

All will be well because the final word, the only word that counts, will belong to God. *All will be well* because God will judge between good and evil. *All will be well* because God will be victorious. *All will be well* because when all is said and done, good will triumph over evil; the kingdom of God will make its appearance; and God will be all in all.

But if it is true that God will be victorious, we can and ought to live in way that reflects our faith and hope. If it is true that God will be victorious, there is no place in our lives for pessimism and gloom; there is no place for despair. To be sure, there is plenty that is wrong in the world about us. To be sure, there is plenty that is wrong in our own lives. To be sure, there is injustice in the world and in our lives. But we who believe that Christ will come again know that in the end, in God's time and God's way, all will be well. All will be well because God will be victorious. All will be well because God will do what we cannot—God will bring our work and our lives to completion.

This is what it means to believe that Christ will come again. This is why our lives should be filled with joy, with hope, and with confidence in the power of God to save us and world in which we live. This is why and this is what I believe.