

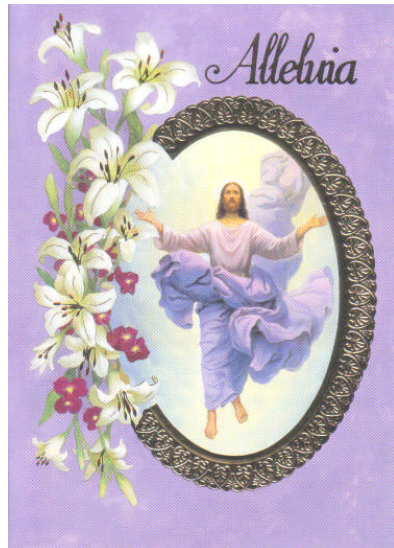
Jesus' Second Coming

Overview

Catholics believe that the “*end times*” refers to the conclusion of time and history at some future time. These end times culminate with the *Second Coming of Jesus*.

What is the Second Coming?

Before Jesus ascended into heaven He told His followers that “He would be with them – until the end of time”. This is called the “*parousia*” a Greek word meaning presence or arrival. When this occurs “*Jesus descends from the heavens with the sound of a trumpet*” as further discussed in the Catechism CCC#1001.



When is the Second Coming?

For almost two millennium - this has been the unanswered question of Christianity. Date setting has been common since then but we know that no one has been right yet. At the end of the first 1000 years and in our own time - we saw the year 2000 proclaimed as that date – and of course they were all wrong.

Jesus Himself said that no one knows except The Father Himself when the end of time comes (Mark 13:32). The church teaches that the “*final hour*” has already been initiated with the resurrection and ascension of Jesus into heaven. We wait now for His Second Coming which could occur in the next few moments or centuries from now. If you listen carefully to the Communion Rite during mass you will hear the

priest recite “...as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ”.

What are the signs of the Second Coming?

The church teaches (CCC#674-677) that there are three visible signs that must occur prior the Second Coming of Jesus. This could provide some clue as to whether we are close at any time. They are as follows:

1. The Church must go through an ultimate trial – that will shake the faith of believers. The Church will face severe persecutions. The Antichrist – who is a pseudo-messiah will glorify himself in the place of God. See CCC#675 for a further discussion.
2. Jesus told His disciples at the “*Olivet Discourse*” (Matthew 24:14) that the Gospel must be preached to all the nations. It is debatable whether this has occurred although we could say that missionary work has certainly occurred throughout the world. The missionary mandate of the Church is to share the Good News. See the Catechism CCC#849-856 for a fuller discussion.
3. Israel must recognize Jesus as their long awaited Messiah prior to the Parousia. The Second Coming is suspended in history until Israel repents and the full number of gentiles comes into the church (Romans 11:25). It is not certain whether this has fully happened yet or the form it would take for the conversion of Israel – although there are glimmers of hope. Refer to CCC#673-674 for a fuller discussion.

Be ready

For all of us alive today and for those not born yet – the end is still near. Since we are mortal - each of us has his or hers own end time. The Gospels contain several parables that exemplify this concept as Jesus tells us to be ready.