

# After months in space, astronauts returning to changed world

April 10 2020, by Marcia Dunn

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In this image from video made available by NASA, U.S. astronaut Jessica Meir speaks, accompanied by Andrew Morgan and Chris Cassidy, during a news conference held by the American members of the International Space Station on Friday, April 10, 2020. Meir and Morgan said they expect it will be tough returning to such a drastically changed world next week, after a half-year or more in space. (NASA via AP)

Two NASA astronauts said Friday they expect it will be tough returning

to such a drastically changed world next week, after more than half a year at the International Space Station.

Andrew Morgan said the crew has tried to keep atop the pandemic news. But it's hard to comprehend what's really going on and what to expect, he noted, when his nine-month mission ends next Friday.

"It is quite surreal for us to see this whole situation unfolding on the planet below," said Jessica Meir, who took part in the first all-female spacewalk last fall. "We can tell you that the Earth still looks just as stunning as always from up here, so it's difficult to believe all the changes that have taken place since both of us have been up here."

As an [emergency physician](#) in the Army, Morgan said he feels a little guilty coming back midway through the medical crisis.

"It's very hard to fathom," Morgan told reporters.

Meir said it will be difficult not being able to hug family and friends, after seven months off the planet. She anticipates feeling even more isolated on Earth than in space.

"We're so busy with so many other amazing pursuits and we have this incredible vantage point of the Earth below, that we don't really feel as much of that isolation," Meir said.

"So we'll see how it goes and how I adjust," she said. "But it will, of course, be wonderful to see some family and friends, at least virtually and from a distance for now."

Morgan flew to the [space station](#) last July, and Meir last September. They will return in a Soyuz capsule with Russian Oleg Skripochka, landing in Kazakhstan. Their [departure](#) will leave three astronauts, who

arrived Thursday, on board.

The three will return exactly 50 years after the Apollo 13 astronauts splashed down in the Pacific. An oxygen tank explosion aborted the moon-landing mission.

"Once again, now there's a crisis and the crisis is on Earth," Morgan said.

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