Palm Sunday
Passion Sunday 2009

We began our celebration by recalling the triumphal entry
of Jesus into Jerusalem, cloaks and palm branches covering His pathway…
Hosanna!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!
Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is to come!
Hosanna in the highest
This exclamation, joined to what we read in the Revelation, chapter 4
Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might
is exactly what we proclaim at each Mass as we move to the altar
and prepare to receive this very particular triumphal entry
that is the Eucharist.
As we will see, we can understand the Eucharist as a "triumphal entry".

We not only recalled the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem
but also just recalled the Passion of Jesus (Matthew 26-27).
The Passion of Jesus (linked, of course, to the Resurrection of Jesus)
is *the* triumphal entry.
When I say "triumphal entry" I mean

- the victory of divine love
- divine love coming to us despite all obstacles

In His Passion, Death and Resurrection,
Jesus pours forth His love, and thus triumphs.
This is a typically Catholic perspective.
Many Protestants view the Resurrection as triumph over the Passion/Death.
No no no.
Everything is triumph because everything, mysteriously, is love.
It is important to grasp what the Catholic Church has come to grasp.
It is important to know why we are Catholic? Indeed, why Catholic?

Holy Week is really a week of triumphant love.
This is what makes it a *holy* week.
"Holiness", according to Thomas Aquinas, is the "purity of divine love".
As Paul says in I Corinthians 13: "Love never fails".
Jesus never fails.
If a week of triumph, then the week is all about Jesus as *king*, Jesus reigning.

How does He reign? As suggested: *in love*.
Jesus is King *in laying down His life* for us,
"for no greater love has a person than to lay down his love for his friends.".
He comes to reign with love and mercy,
He comes *not* to reign by "lording it over us."
He comes to reign from within, not from without.
He comes to reign *in our hearts*.
It is not always easy to grasp, for real kings normally do not die.
This king dies.
Jesus dies *in order to become* king.
Through all that Jesus experiences,
which He chooses to let happen beforehand, Jesus loves.
And so Jesus is victorious in love over our suffering and dying.

In fact, along the journey to His death, Jesus takes upon Himself, i.e. *suffers*,
all the things that "kill", that kill the human heart:

- betrayal and abandonment
- slander and mockery
- denial and rejection

Jesus endures *everything* that normally stops love
so that *nothing* stop love, *divine* love.
This is so amazingly shown at the Last Supper, when Jesus says,
once Judas has taken the morsel and left table,
"Now is the Son of Man glorified."
Glory is the overflow, the excess of divine love.

Triumphant love, glory:

- *This* is what we celebrate.
- *This* is what reaches us right where we are, like nothing else.
- *This* is what makes the Passion salvific.
- *This* is what causes Jesus to rise from the dead.

As we each cling to a palm, let us lay down our lives on the pathway
as Jesus comes to us
(in particular, in and through the Eucharist—aah: triumphant love…).
As we each cling to a palm, let us say to Jesus:
"You are my King and Messiah.
Please reign in my heart, that there be nothing but love in my life."