



## SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



### **Palm Sunday 2006 April 9, 2006**

Dear friends in Christ: in this Procession and Mass for Palm Sunday, the first of the great liturgies of Holy Week, we celebrate Our Lord's triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem as King and Messiah. But the Lord's was a strange triumphal entry: for the triumph had not yet been achieved, but was to be accomplished later in that week; the King who came rode not proudly on a horse of war, but meekly and humbly on a beast of burden; the triumph over death was to be attained not by the Lord's holding himself immune to death, but by his making himself to be subject to death. So it is that after the Procession, during the Mass we read the account of the Lord's Passion and Death.

The Procession and Mass themselves have three levels of meaning. They are, first, the commemoration of the great saving events of the Lord's Paschal Mystery, the greatest events in human history, by which we were delivered from sin and death and by which the gates of heaven were opened to us. But secondly, they are a celebration of the most important of all present realities, that of the Lord, the triumphant Messiah, leading us through the Sacraments of Initiation into the new city of Jerusalem, his Church, where his Passion, Death and Resurrection are made present for us again through the Eucharist, by which we offer ourselves with his sacrifice and receive from that sacrifice already the beginning of resurrection and new life. Finally, the Mass and Procession point beyond themselves to the final consummation of all things, when our triumphant Lord and Messiah will come again, call us forth from our graves to the general resurrection, and lead all who have, by his grace, followed him with living faith in this life into the heavenly city of Jerusalem, where his Passion and Death are now known by the glorious beauty of his wounds, and the glorious beauty of all our past sufferings united to his and now transformed forever into glorious life, radiant beauty, joy without end.

Let us, then, dear friends, celebrate this great liturgy with faith and devotion; let us make every effort to celebrate later this week the greatest of the Church's liturgies, those of the Paschal Triduum, when we celebrate the actual saving events which we anticipate today; let us invite others to join us in the Triduum celebrations, others who have not yet known the Lord or his Church but who are searching, others who, perhaps, have become estranged from the Lord's Church and whom we must call back to reconciliation and peace and joy. For in these celebrations the Lord makes present through us the saving power of the mystery of his Passion and Death and Resurrection, he makes that saving power present through us for ourselves and for all the world, the world which needs that saving power so much, the world for whom that saving power is made present by these celebrations, whether it takes notice of what we do or not. Ours then this week in celebrating these liturgies is a work of cooperation with the Lord of supreme importance; let us give ourselves to it with all faith and devotion and love.