

A palindrome is word or a phrase that reads the same frontwards and backwards.

Words like:

*eye, nun, pip, pop, deed, toot, civic, level, madam, radar, rotor, & racecar*

The longest English single-word palindrome is 'redivider,' although in Finnish there are a couple of 25-letter palindromes, which are actually compound words which are palindromes meaning (1) a soap-cup trader, and (2) a measurement laboratory for tomatoes.

Although not a palindrome, the word "God" when spelled backwards is "dog." And there has been much ink spilled on reflecting on this unique-to-English spelling relationship.

One thing we can say about dogs, is that they are amazingly loyal. You can leave a dog for only a couple of minutes, and if you walk back in the house - well, it's like the dog is having a party to celebrate your reunion. If only we treated each other with such enthusiasm!

I remember my one of my brother's dogs - Elwood - who would faithfully return whatever you threw ... be it a tennis ball, or a stuffed toy squirrel ... over and over and over. Even if you got sick of the game, and put the tennis ball on the table; Elwood would faithfully pick it up, walk around with it, and bring it back to you.

In today's readings we hear the origins and instructions for the Passover Feast. And when performing religious observances, it is an all-too-human thing to get wrapped up in the details and forget the reasons.

In the Gospel, Jesus is verbally sparring with the Pharisees over how much work ... is actually *work* ... in relation to the Sabbath.

Jesus quotes the first part of Hosea, Chapter 6, verse 6 and says:

*I desire mercy, not sacrifice*

Which in the Revised New American Bible is rendered, *I desire loyalty, not sacrifice ...* and in the New Revised Standard Version is rendered, *I desire steadfast love, ...* the Hebrew word is *chesed*, and it has all those meanings.

In a sense, when we get too wrapped up in rules, we start to become ... dare I say ... judgmental ... and we stop seeing people as people, and rather as mere objects. In the same way, when we lose sight of ... *mercy, loyalty, & steadfast love* ... we lose sight of what God has called us to, and not only how much God loves us, but how God is calling us to love one another.

As we approach this altar to receive Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament; let us reflect on God's mercy for us ... His *chesed* ... *mercy* ... *loyalty* ... *steadfast love* ... and may the graces of this Eucharist stir our hearts into flame ... to go forth from this place burning with God's love ... God's mercy ... the *chesed* He has for us and desires from us.