

Jesus makes a **surprising link** in the conversation we just heard in the Gospel Reading.

- He links forever the commandment to love **God** with the commandment to love **one's neighbour** as oneself.

In Jesus' time, this answer was surprising because it put love for neighbour at the same level that love for God. No one had ever done that before; everyone simply agreed that loving God **came first**.

- Loving one's neighbor was good, they thought, but it was **secondary** – the primary thing was loving **God**.
- Jesus challenges this: true love for God, he teaches, **cannot exist** apart from true love for neighbor.
- If someone claims to love God, that **invisible** love can be **verified** in the **visible** way they treat their neighbor.

If I don't love the God **in whose image** my neighbour is created, how long and how deeply can I **really, truly** love my neighbour?

Jesus said the Scribe was "close to the Kingdom" because he had touched on the essence of living: loving God and loving others as a single but distinct reality.

By this will all know that you are my disciples – that you love God? that you never miss Mass? that you have special devotion to Our Lady? No, none of these by itself. What is essential and sufficient is to love God in loving others and to love others in loving God.  
"Is that it?" Yes, that's it. Yes, this is it.

Jesus Inserts a Shocking Link and today we may link this *Loving the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength...* With the sacramental process because they were talking about the Forgiving Father parable in their workshop. God's mercy leads us to forgiveness and the love of God moves us into Reconciliation. When we truly know that we love God first and foremost that affects all our lives, our actions, everything we do. God is the source and God is love.  
Let's link this beautiful and challenging commandment into **the Plenary Council too, because this plenary council it is just another way to** show our care for what is happening with the church, in the church, with our future here in Australia at this time...