Q1. (Faith) Philip, one of the deacons ordained in the previous chapter, baptized the believing Samaritans but the Holy Spirit “had not fallen upon any of them” until Apostles came down from Jerusalem, prayed for them and “laid hands on them.” How does this event give you a better understanding of Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation and who has been given the authority and power by God to administer them?

Acts 8:12, 14-17

12 But once they began to believe Philip as he preached the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, men and women alike were baptized.

14 Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent them Peter and John,

15 who went down and prayed for them, that they might receive the holy Spirit,

16 for it had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

17 Then they laid hands on them and they received the holy Spirit.

CCC1288 "From that time on the apostles, in fulfillment of Christ's will, imparted to the newly baptized by the laying on of hands the gift of the Spirit that completes the grace of Baptism. For this reason in the Letter to the Hebrews the doctrine concerning Baptism and the laying on of hands is listed among the first elements of Christian instruction. The imposition of hands is rightly recognized by the Catholic tradition as the origin of the sacrament of Confirmation, which in a certain way perpetuates the grace of Pentecost in the Church."

Q2. (Hope) There was mutual hostility between the Jews and the Samaritans as exemplified in the story of Jesus and the woman at the well. This hostility was overcome by the power of the Church preaching the Gospel to all people. What hope does this give you that in today’s contentious world, the Gospel has the power to bring people to faith in God?

John 4:9

The Samaritan woman said to him, "How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" (For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.)

Q3. (Love) One of the Spiritual Acts of Mercy is to instruct the ignorant. How is it an act of love to instruct someone in the faith and what can result from that instruction?

Acts 8:30-31

30 Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?”

31 He replied, “How can I, unless someone instructs me?” So he invited Philip to get in and sit with him.

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Philip, a deacon, had the authority and power by virtue of his ordination to baptize people into the faith. However, it required the authority and power of an apostle, a bishop, to perform the Sacrament of Confirmation which Peter and John do, and the Holy Spirit fell on the Samaritans. It is a separate act from Baptism. Under certain circumstances, it may be delegated to a priest, but the Sacrament of Confirmation is normally administered by a bishop.

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Our world is suffering from people who have assumed the role of God, as did Adam and Eve before them in determining what is right and wrong. That is God’s prerogative, alone, and He has made clear through the Decalogue, the Sermon on the Mount, and the teachings of the Church the boundaries of sin. It is only preaching and living the Gospel that we can bring the faith to the world so that the holy Spirit can move to accept the faith and believe through mental assent and living in Christ.

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The greatest good that we can do for another person is to bring them to faith in Jesus Christ. Every other work of mercy we do is beneficial but temporary. Bringing someone to faith has eternal consequences that no other work of mercy has.

**John 14:12**

**Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father.**