Q1. (Faith) Many have debated the efficacy of infant baptism in the Catholic Church. There are numerous instances, especially in Acts, of baptism of whole households or families. How do these references help you understand the Church’s teaching and practice of infant baptism?

Acts 11:13-14

13 Peter, 14 who will speak words to you by which you and all your household will be saved.’

Acts 2:38-39

And Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children...”

Acts 16:31, 33

31 And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you and your household will be saved.”

33 He took them in at that hour of the night and bathed their wounds; then he and all his family were baptized at once.

CCC1252

The practice of infant Baptism is an immemorial tradition of the Church. There is explicit testimony to this practice from the second century on, and it is quite possible that, from the beginning of the apostolic preaching, when whole "households" received baptism, infants may also have been baptized.

CCC1250

Born with a fallen human nature and tainted by original sin, children also have need of the new birth in Baptism to be freed from the power of darkness and brought into the realm of the freedom of the children of God, to which all men are called. The sheer gratuitousness of the grace of salvation is particularly manifest in infant Baptism. The Church and the parents would deny a child the priceless grace of becoming a child of God were they not to confer Baptism shortly after birth.

Q2. (Hope) When the Grace of faith was poured out on Jews and Gentiles alike in Antioch, Barnabas rejoiced at what the Lord had done. How does the opening of the faith to the Gentiles affect your hope of salvation, being a Gentile yourself?

Acts 11:20-23

20 There were some Cypriots and Cyrenians among them, however, who came to Antioch and began to speak to the Greeks as well, proclaiming the Lord Jesus.

21 The hand of the Lord was with them and a great number who believed turned to the Lord.

22 The news about them reached the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas [to go] to Antioch.

23 When he arrived and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced and encouraged them all to remain faithful to the Lord in firmness of heart

Q3. (Love) One of the first acts of the Church in Antioch after receiving the Grace of faith and baptism was to send relief to fellow Christians in Judea. How does this act of charity encourage acts of charity in response to your own gift of faith?

Acts 11:29-30

29 So the disciples determined that, according to ability, each should send relief to the brothers who lived in Judea.

30 This they did, sending it to the presbyters in care of Barnabas and Saul.

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Faith is an unmerited gift from God given to every human being by God. It takes no merit or action on our part to receive the Grace of faith. This is no more clearly demonstrated than in the practice of infant baptism; the infant has no capacity to do anything at all to “earn” the Grace of faith. The fact that whole households or families, without age or capacity of reason, were baptized by the Apostles attests to the Biblical basis for infant baptism. If the ability to reason and make a commitment of faith were a prerequisite to baptism, there would be a human element of participation in receipt of Grace. Indeed, adult baptism of an adult carries that participation, however, the forgiveness of sins, especially Original Sin, is still an unmerited Grace given by God.

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As a Gentile, if Gentiles had been excluded from the faith, I, too, would have been excluded. I am grateful that have been given the Grace of faith, especially in the Catholic Church.

A3. (Love) One of the first acts of the Church in Antioch after receiving the Grace of faith and baptism was to send relief to fellow Christians in Judea. How does this act of charity encourage acts of charity in response to your own gift of faith?

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29 So the disciples determined that, according to ability, each should send relief to the brothers who lived in Judea.

30 This they did, sending it to the presbyters in care of Barnabas and Saul.

Faith must always be followed by charity. Without the love for our fellow man, our faith is hollow and insincere. Indeed, we will be judged by our faith and our works.

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

Matthew 25:34, 40-41, 45-46

34 Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

40 And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’

41 Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

45 He will answer them, ‘Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.’

46 And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”