Q1. (Faith) St. Paul sees the Providence of God to be such that whatever occurs to us in life because of our faith will, nevertheless, be a greater blessing than whatever harm befalls us. How can you put that vision of God’s providence into practice in your life?

CCC313

"We know that in everything God works for good for those who love him."180 The constant witness of the saints confirms this truth:

St. Catherine of Siena said to "those who are scandalized and rebel against what happens to them": "Everything comes from love, all is ordained for the salvation of man, God does nothing without this goal in mind."

St. Thomas More, shortly before his martyrdom, consoled his daughter:   
"Nothing can come but that that God wills. And I make me very sure that whatsoever that be, seem it never so bad in sight, it shall indeed be the best."

Dame Julian of Norwich: "Here I was taught by the grace of God that I should steadfastly keep me in the faith... and that at the same time I should take my stand on and earnestly believe in what our Lord shewed in this time — that 'all manner [of] thing shall be well.'"

Q2. (Hope) St. Paul is willing to die for the name of Jesus. What must be his hope to be willing to lay down his life for a faith that, at one time in his life, he vigorously persecuted? How do you share that hope?

Acts 21:12-14

12 When we heard this, we and the local residents begged him not to go up to Jerusalem.

13 Then Paul replied, “What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? I am prepared not only to be bound but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”

1. Since he would not be dissuaded, we let the matter rest, saying, “The Lord’s will be done.”

Q3. (Love) To St. Paul, salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and love of neighbor is more important than dietary restrictions or other religious practices. Consider our Church today, how can we be putting stumbling blocks before the faith of others by our actions or words instead of yielding and removing obstacles to faith? Does this mean what we believe must change to accommodate others?

Romans 14:13-21

13 Then let us no longer judge one another,   
but rather resolve never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.

14 I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself;   
still, it is unclean for someone who thinks it unclean.

19 Let us then pursue what leads to peace and to building up one another.

20 For the sake of food, do not destroy the work of God.   
Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to become a stumbling block by eating;

21 it is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything   
that causes your brother to stumble.

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First, what I do must be done in faith and for no other purpose. Given the reliance on my faith in Jesus, everything else is of minor consequence. Love of God and neighbor conquers all. I must simply be willing to accept the pain and off it up to God, unifying it with the much greater pain suffered by Our Lord. Then, I will trust in the salvation of the Lord.

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Clearly, the hope of St. Paul is the hope of salvation. Through faithful perseverance in the love of God and neighbor, St. Paul hopes for the resurrection of the body and eternal life in the Presence of the Lord.

I, too, hope for the resurrection of the body and eternal life in the Presence of the Lord and I pray for the strength to persevere to the end in faith and love of neighbor.

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Our insistence on particular practices in the Church, such as, wearing veils or Latin in the Mass, can be a stumbling block to other Christians. I suspect for myself, my insistence on adhering to the teachings of the Church, in particular regarding interpretation of the Bible in accordance with Church teaching can be a stumbling block to others. For example, I insist that the Gospels were in fact written by the Apostles St.’s Matthew and John, and by St.’s Mark and Luke, companions of St. Peter and St. Paul, respectively. Not everyone agrees.

I also think we should be studying the Bible addressing the Senses of Scripture defined in the Catechism as recommended by the Church. (Hence, the faith, hope, and love questions.

While I can accommodate other opinions, for the sake of comity, I do not have to change my belief or stop espousing the teachings of the Church. I just have to be nice about it.

CCC116 The literal sense is the meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture and discovered by exegesis, following the rules of sound interpretation: "  
All other senses of Sacred Scripture are based on the literal."

CCC117 The spiritual sense. Thanks to the unity of God's plan, not only the text of Scripture but also the realities and events about which it speaks can be signs.

* The allegorical sense [faith]. We can acquire a more profound understanding of events by recognizing their significance in Christ; thus the crossing of the Red Sea is a sign or type of Christ's victory and of Christian Baptism.
* The moral sense [love. The events reported in Scripture ought to lead us to act justly. As St. Paul says, they were written "for our instruction".
* The anagogical sense (Greek: anagoge, "leading") [hope]. We can view realities and events in terms of their eternal significance, leading us toward our true homeland: thus the Church on earth is a sign of the heavenly Jerusalem.