

“WHAT IS IN YOUR CUP?”

*Homily of His Eminence Peter Ebere Cardinal Okpaleke on October 4, 2026, the 27th
Sunday of Year A, at Ss Simon and Jude, The Woodlands, Texas*

1. Preamble

I am here at the invitation of your pastor, Fr. Pat Garrett, and with the consent of Archbishop Joe S. Vasquez. I am happy to meet you and to say thank you for the assistance you have rendered to our Diocese. Although I had sent an appreciation letter for the donation from your parish towards the construction of the Community Children and Welfare Home in my diocese, I am delighted to thank you again in person.

Interestingly, the readings today are about being fruitful. We are like seeds God has sown in the world. God’s intention is that we bear good fruits. Good fruits benefit other creatures. The charity you extended to our diocese is already evidence of your commitment to enhancing life, especially for the poor and vulnerable. Once more, thank you. Having watched the short clip about our project for vulnerable adults and children, we pray that God continues to bless your generosity and support our efforts.

2. What is in your Cup?

The readings today reminded me of an old story. Some of you might know it. Some call it the spilled coffee story. Imagine holding a cup filled with hot coffee. Someone walking by accidentally bumps into you. If asked, why did you spill the coffee? Most people would say, “I spilled the coffee because someone bumped into me!” But there is another equally correct response – “I spilled coffee because coffee is what is in the cup.” If tea or orange juice had been in the cup, tea or orange juice would have been spilled. Whenever one is bumped into, what is inside the cup is what spills.

The readings today tell us something about the cup and its contents. Like the landowner who set up a vineyard, God has fashioned us like cups and provided us with enabling conditions. Our task is to fill our cups with the best fluid. In the second reading, St. Paul invites us to fill our minds “with everything that is true, everything that is noble, everything that is good and pure, everything that we love and honor, and everything that can be thought virtuous or worthy of praise.” If we do this, St. Paul concludes, “then the God of peace will be with you!”

3. What Spills?

Life continues to bump into us not only in difficult moments but also through the opportunities it presents to us. The question is what spills when life bumps into you. The tenants in the Gospel had it good. But instead of their good fortune bringing out gratitude, what came out was greed, even to the point of murder, so that they could appropriate what did not belong to them. So, let us ask ourselves what spills out when life bumps into us – Is it love, patience, honesty, and integrity? Or self-centredness, greed, arrogance, etc?

4. The Stone Rejected by the Builders has become the Keystone

The Gospel ends on a note of hope based on the mercy of God. For the religious establishment of Jesus' time, tax collectors and those they called sinners, were already damned. They had no hope of salvation. Jesus reverses that. No one is a prisoner of his or her past. The present is the time of grace. If anyone accepts the Good News and begins to fill his or her cup with the Words of truth and life, a new life of grace surges forth in his or her life.

5. Conclusion

May we pray that by God's grace we may continue to fill our cups with all that is virtuous and loving; all that is noble so that we can bear the fruit of faith, patience, mercy, love and peace.

Amen.