Meeting Minutes

May 14, 2026

Time	6:40 PM
Present	Vivian Rogers, Rebecca Brubaker, Father Perkl, Roxanne Tozier, Suzanne Schanno, Sylvia Sabouty, Brett Forsman, Michael Wilde
Not Present	Greg Robinson, Cesar Nocon, Sarah Dickhausen, Andy Gardner, Sarah Bertram
Prepared From	Minutes AI Notes

Opening Prayer and Reflection

The meeting opened with a reflection on the Beatitudes and a prayer asking for humility, mercy, purity of heart, patience, and wisdom in service to others. Members reflected personally on several Beatitudes, especially peacemaking, meekness, purity of heart, and persecution for righteousness.

Discussion included:

- Jesus blessing those the world often overlooks.
- Insights on meekness and seeing the dignity of the poor and vulnerable.
- Reflections on missionary witness, grace, and interior purity.
- Recognition of the need for soft hearts and peacemaking within parish life.

Approval of Previous Minutes

- Approval of the previous month's minutes was tabled until the next meeting.

Stewardship and Budget Update

- Positive feedback was received following recent stewardship announcements.
- Parish giving remains steady with a slight increase above average.
- Two major gifts exceeding $5,000 were received.
- Despite encouraging signs, the parish continues to operate at a significant deficit.
- Ongoing stewardship updates will likely continue monthly.

- Upcoming meetings:
  - Finance Council: Next Wednesday
  - Stewardship Committee: June 2
- AI-generated financial charts were created to help communicate trends.

Pastoral Letter Discussion

The council began discussing the Archbishop's pastoral letter and plans to study it section-by-section over the coming months.

Key Themes Discussed

- The ordinary life lived in the presence of God.
- References to St. Thérèse and Brother Lawrence.
- The idea that modern culture suffers from a "culture of absence," marked by spiritual emptiness and loss of awareness of God's presence.
- The Church's role in gradually introducing people to deeper truths through relationship and accompaniment.

Spiritual and Anthropological Themes

Discussion included:

- Hunger for belonging and meaning.
- St. Augustine's teaching: "Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee."
- The importance of interior reflection, adoration, and Sabbath rest.
- Recognition that many families and young people have never been formed in marriage, virtue, or sacramental life.

Family, Formation, and Evangelization

Council members discussed concerns regarding:

- Increasing family instability.
- Declining sacramental participation.
- Young adults lacking formation in marriage and faith.

Major Points

- Families need accompaniment, not condemnation.
- Parents are primary educators, but children also possess free will and accountability.
- Parish communities should walk alongside families with education, witness, and support.
- Evangelization often begins through relationships, personal witness, and joy.

Suggested Entry Points

- Blessing and affirming marriages publicly at Mass.
- Using the Canaan dinner for testimony and witness.
- Creating intentional entry points for single individuals and those who may feel overlooked.

Public Education and Cultural Engagement

A substantial discussion focused on the pastoral letter's comments regarding public education.

Concerns Raised

- Some members felt portions of the letter could be perceived as dismissive or divisive toward public schools.
- Others emphasized that public schools are limited in their ability to teach explicitly about God and spiritual truth.

Shared Reflections

- Catholic schools also face pressures toward secularization.
- Modern systems often emphasize only biopsychosocial dimensions while neglecting spiritual and moral formation.
- There is increasing openness in broader culture to questions of meaning, morality, and human flourishing.
- The parish should seek partnership and respectful engagement with public institutions.

Human Person, Morality, and Formation

Discussion referenced:

- St. Thomas Aquinas' understanding of the human person.
- Morality as involving meaning, virtue, agency, and flourishing—not merely rules.
- The importance of apologetics grounded in gentleness and personal witness.

The council reflected on:

- Living sacramental and devotional family life.
- Practicing the presence of God.
- The necessity of Jesus as the center of parish mission and renewal.

Parish Council and SET Team Collaboration

A major portion of the meeting focused on possible restructuring and collaboration between the Parish Council and SET Team.

Current Challenges

- Teams currently meet separately with limited communication.
- Similar brainstorming often occurs independently.
- Ideas are not always translated effectively into action.

Proposed Direction

A new model tentatively called the **Parish Pastoral Evangelization Council** was discussed.

Proposed Features

- Integration of vision, discernment, strategy, and implementation.
- Use of members' gifts and charisms rather than simply filling demographic slots.
- Creation of smaller "squads" or implementation teams.
- Quarterly visionary meetings paired with monthly action-oriented meetings.

Concerns Raised

- Maintaining space for prayerful discernment and "big picture" thinking.
- Avoiding excessive focus on logistics.
- Clarifying leadership roles and governance structure.

Governance and Bylaws

Discussion included:

- Current bylaws specify nine voting members.
- Possible need to revise or rewrite bylaws depending on restructuring.
- Clarification that parish pastoral council bylaws are locally determined.
- Leadership elections may be postponed until after the July visionary meeting.

Interim Leadership

- The vice chair will temporarily serve as chair until a permanent structure is determined.
- Sarah's final meeting will be next month, and appreciation will be formally expressed.

Campaign Update

- The parish campaign continues to be successful.
- Two listening sessions have already been held.
- A third listening session is scheduled for May 26.
- 58 parishioners have completed the online survey.
- A June 2 internal planning meeting will synthesize findings into a long-range strategic plan.

Ministry Updates

Upcoming Events

- Pentecost celebration: May 23–24
- Outdoor Eucharistic Procession: June 7

Mental Health and Accompaniment Initiatives

- Mary Mother was selected as an implementation/pilot parish alongside:
  - Our Lady of Grace
  - Annunciation Church
- Discussions are ongoing with:
  - Catholics in Recovery
  - Red Bird Ministries
- Red Bird Ministries serves families grieving the loss of a child.
- Janet has been assigned as staff liaison.

Elijah Institute Partnership Update

- The Elijah Institute has formalized an agreement with Saint Mary's University of Minnesota.
- Saint Mary’s has launched a Catholic-integrated clinical psychology master’s program.
- The Elijah Institute will serve as the continuing education provider.
- Plans are underway to place interns in partner parishes to facilitate small groups and accompaniment initiatives.

Faith Formation

- Upcoming family event next Wednesday:
  - Dinner and petting zoo beginning at 6:00 PM.
  - Families from faith formation programs are invited.

New Ministry

- Suzanne introduced a new ministry initiative called “Cooks for Kids.”

Action Items

- Send revised digital version link to all members.
- Combine “Peter, Paul, and John” materials into a single email communication.

Prayer Requests

Prayers were requested for:

- Rebecca’s father recently hospitalized and facing major life transitions.

- Michael's brother currently hospitalized.
- Vivians 96-year-old mother in declining health.
- Vivians's sister serving as caregiver.
- Sylvias mother recently hospitalized with serious medical issues.
- All caregivers and families experiencing illness or suffering.

Closing Prayer

The meeting concluded with the Prayer to the Holy Family:

> *"Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, in you we contemplate the splendor of true love…"*

The meeting closed in prayer