

Living Arrangements for Pastors

Canon 533, par. 1, states: "The pastor is obliged to reside in a parish house close to the church; in particular cases, however, the local ordinary can permit him to live elsewhere, especially in a house shared by several presbyters, provided there is a just cause and suitable and due provision is made for the performance of parochial functions."

In those cases where a parish has no rectory, it is clear that the pastor must live elsewhere, e.g., an apartment, or a house owned or rented by the parish, but extravagance must be avoided. In these cases, the parish shall pay for all housing and utility expenses (except, e.g., for personal long-distance calls) just as it would if it had a rectory for the priest to live in.

In those cases where a parish has a rectory, but the rectory is rented out or used and maintained for other purposes, e.g., catechetics, meetings, pastoral counseling, etc., a pastor may live elsewhere, as above, with the same arrangements for the payment of housing and utility expenses.

In either case, the following conditions must be met:

1. The Bishop of the Diocese must approve.
2. The people must have relatively easy access to the pastor, a.v., the pastor must still be considered as living in the midst of those he serves.
3. The phone number of the place where he lives must be published for the benefit of those needing emergency service. (A pastor may have his own personal number, even unlisted, at his own expense.)
4. Ordinary parish business, especially counseling, must be conducted at the parish, not at the place where the pastor is living.

These same conditions prevail if the pastor wishes to purchase his own home with personal funds. In this case, the costs to the parish for rent, phone, insurance, electricity, and fuel must be worked out by the pastor and the parish council(s), and approved by the Bishop. (When more than one parish is involved, the costs must be pro-rated, using the parishes' DAA goals as a criterion for percentages.)

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