

§4250 PRIEST PET POLICY

4251.1. Policy A priest who wishes to have or keep a pet shall notify the Vicar for Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations (hereinafter “Vicar for Clergy”) to discuss the same in order to ensure that the pet will not place an undue burden upon the priest, his assignment, or ministry and ensure that the terms of this policy are understood.

Procedures:

- a) The decision to have or keep a pet entails a level of responsibility that requires that the priest evaluate the effect that it will have on his time, his ministry, and his living arrangements. The Vicar for Clergy can help the priest make this evaluation.
- b) When transfers are arranged, the fact that the priest has a pet must be discussed with the Vicar for Clergy.
- c) If a pet is already present in a rectory, anyone being assigned to that house is to be informed beforehand and should discuss the same with the Vicar for Clergy if the presence of a pet will be problematic.
- d) If a priest has a medical need for an official service or comfort animal, the priest should also discuss this need with the Vicar for Clergy.

4252.1. Policy If a priest is living alone, the decision to have a pet is subject to the evaluation and discussion with the Vicar for Clergy as outlined in 4251.1 above. If a priest does not live alone, besides discussing the issue with the Vicar for Clergy, all in the house must also agree beforehand to a pet being brought into the house.

Procedures:

- a) A parochial vicar cannot acquire a pet and bring it into the rectory without the pastor’s approval as well.
- b) The pet should be confined to the living quarters of its owner and be of a nature that does not pollute the atmosphere of the rectory, cause damage, create loud noise, or become violent. The pet should not regularly be in the general living quarters of the rectory, in the parish offices, or other parish buildings. The pet should never be present in the Church.
- c) If a priest who owns a pet is assigned to a parish where the resident priest has a pet, arrangements should be made to see that the pets are compatible or that the living arrangements are such that the animals do not create a disturbance or havoc in the house.

4253.1. Policy A priest who has or keeps a pet shall be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the animal, both physically and financially.

Procedures:

- a) The priest is personally, financially, and legally responsible for any damages done by the pet, whether to property or a person, and for the food, medicine, and other needs of the pet.
- b) Before he moves, a priest who has or has had a pet in the rectory must arrange for the rectory to be cleaned and ready for occupancy for the new priest. This cleaning expense is a personal expense of the priest and should not be paid for by the parish or assignment of the priest.
- c) The priest is expected to know and follow all local and state laws concerning pet ownership, e.g. vaccination, zoning requirements, health codes, care, etc....
- d) The priest is expected to keep his pet under his control to ensure that it does not harm himself or another; he is to keep his pet clean and well groomed; and he is to clean up after his pet.
- e) If, at any time, a priest does not believe he is able to physically or financially care for his pet, he should, in consultation with the Vicar for Clergy, create a plan to transfer ownership of his pet to a person or organization that can accept the responsibility for the same.