

## Directions:

1. Demonstrate evidence of close reading.
2. Highlight your confusion.
3. Answer the three questions at the bottom of the page.
4. Write a 1+ page reflection in your WN.

## Stand Against Prop. 8 Costs Priest Dearly

**Father Geoffrey Farrow is removed from his Fresno post after a sermon against the anti-same-sex marriage measure.**

A week ago, Father Geoffrey Farrow stood before his Roman Catholic parishioners in Fresno and delivered a sermon that placed him squarely at odds with his church over gay marriage.

With Proposition 8 on the November ballot, and his own bishop urging Central Valley priests to support its definition of traditional marriage, Farrow told congregants he felt obligated to break "a numbing silence" about church prejudice against homosexuals.

"How is marriage protected by intimidating gay and lesbian people into loveless and lonely lives?" he asked parishioners of the St. Paul Newman Center. "I am morally compelled to vote no on Proposition 8."

Then Farrow -- who had revealed that he was gay during a television interview immediately before Mass -- added a coda to his sermon.

"I know these words of truth will cost me dearly," he said. "But to withhold them . . . I would become an accomplice to a moral evil that strips gay and lesbian people not only of their civil rights but of their human dignity as well."

On Thursday, Fresno Bishop John T. Steinbock removed Farrow, 50, as pastor of the St. Paul Newman Center, which primarily serves students and faculty at Cal State Fresno.

"Your statement contradicted the teaching of the Catholic Church and has brought scandal to your parish community as well as the whole Church," Steinbock wrote in a disciplinary letter that also admonished Farrow against "using the Internet as a means of continuing your conflict with the Church's teaching."

The priest also was stripped of his salary and benefits, and ordered to stay away from all church communities he had served.

Farrow's comments at the end of the Oct. 5 Mass have left his congregation bitterly divided.

On Sunday, some parishioners praised Farrow's courage for defending the rights of gays and lesbians, while others condemned him for challenging church doctrine without giving warning.

"It upsets me that we are allowing a ballot proposition to come into our church and divide us," said Teresa Huerta, who teaches at Cal State Fresno. "We are going through changes right now in society and the church needs to recognize that."

Frank Gallegos, a parishioner for 24 years, said he was dismayed that Farrow used the pulpit to deliver his message.

"He ambushed us," Gallegos, 44, said while leaving the white concrete-block church with his wife and two children. "I don't wish him ill. I just wish he hadn't done it during Mass."

Parish leaders concluded two morning Masses on Sunday with an apology to parishioners.

Farrow's statements, they said, were not in accord with church teachings. Also, the priest did not inform church elders about his plans before delivering his sermon, said Deacon John Supino, who read a letter from Steinbock reaffirming the Catholic Church's support for Proposition 8.

Quoting Steinbock, Supino said the church teaches that sex is a gift from God to be acted on only by a man and a woman within marriage. But Proposition 8, he insisted, does not represent a condemnation of gays or lesbians.

"The teachings of the church on these matters did not arise with Proposition 8 but have been in place for over 2,000 years," Supino said.

Several parishioners inside the church applauded when Supino finished Steinbock's statement. A few rose and left as he was reading it.

Katherine Allison, 46, hurried out of the church at the end of the 11 a.m. Mass with her 14-year-old son and 7-year-old daughter. She said she didn't want to stay to hear the bishop's letter.

Allison said her entire family liked Father Geoff, as he was known. He taught a Bible history class Tuesday nights and seemed to be passionate about his work, she said.

"There is nothing to apologize for," she said. "God tells us to speak the truth, and that's what he did."

Farrow became a priest 23 years ago, working in parishes in Visalia, Merced, Bakersfield and the nearby town of Arvin. A graduate of St. John's Seminary in Camarillo, he also served as a chaplain in the Air Force Reserve at Edwards Air Force Base near Palmdale in the early 1990s.

Farrow, who said he realized that he was gay in boyhood, revealed his sexual orientation only to close friends and family. He told his parents just four years ago.

"This was the secret I was going to take to my grave," he said.

That changed when he received a June 30 "pastoral letter" from Steinbock's office in which the bishop condemned the California Supreme Court's ruling in May that legalized same-sex marriage, and supported the passage of Proposition 8, calling marriage between a man and woman the "foundation blocks for society." He compared the court's action to efforts by Nazi Germany and the Communist regimes in Russia and China to alter family arrangements.

"Let us pray for our Christian marriages and our Christian families, and for our children who will be subjected to brainwashing in our public school system regarding this matter," he wrote.

Steinbock's letter threw Farrow into a moral quandary, he said, and prompted his sermon.

"At what point do you cease to be an agent for healing and growth and become an accomplice of injustice?" he asked.

Farrow said he knew his comments would generate an uproar. He started to pack up his office the night before his address. He cleared his belongings from the church rectory within hours of greeting parishioners after church services. He left town so quickly that he was unable to find one of his two cats.

He drove to Los Angeles, where he is staying with friends. Farrow sent Steinbock a letter last week saying that he would resume his pastoral duties unless he heard otherwise.

But in his disciplinary letter, Steinbock said Farrow had abandoned his assignment without offering to discuss the issues. Steinbock said he had no choice but to suspend Farrow, and he hinted that other penalties could follow, including defrocking him. Steinbock did not return calls.

*Source: Duke Helfand and Catherine Salliant, LA Times*

1. What is the authors' purpose?
2. Who is the intended audience?
3. List three strategies the writers use to try to achieve their purpose: