



STOCKCERO TEACHING KIT (061)

TEXT: *Réquiem por un campesino español* (1953)

AUTHOR: Ramón J. Sender

EDITOR: Borja Rodríguez-Gutiérrez

PART 1: CONTEXT & CRITICAL ANALYSIS

(Based on the Introduction by Borja Rodríguez-Gutiérrez)

1. RAMÓN J. SENDER: WITNESS AND EXILE:

Aragonese Roots and War:

Born in Aragon in 1901, Sender's early life was shaped by rural Spain and his service in the Moroccan War (1923), which radicalized his political views towards the left and against social injustice.

Journalism and Activism:

A combative journalist, Sender exposed the Casas Viejas massacre (1933), marking him as an enemy of the right. The Spanish Civil War brought personal tragedy—the execution of his wife and brother by Nationalists—fueling his lifelong opposition to Francoism.

Writing from Exile:

Réquiem, written in the US in 1953 (originally titled *Mosén Millán*), is a product of exile, reflecting a Spain preserved in memory and sorrow.

2. ALEGORY OF THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR:

Microcosm of Conflict:

The novel serves as a potent allegory for the Spanish Civil War. The village represents Spain; Paco el del Molino symbolizes the Spanish people striving for justice; and Mosén Millán embodies the Spanish Church, complicit with the traditional powers.

The Trinity of Power:

The forces opposing Paco—Don Valeriano (traditional property/Franco), Don Gumersindo, and Sr. Cástulo (the vacillating bourgeoisie)—represent the coalition that crushed the Republic. Their "payment" for the mass mirrors Judas's thirty pieces of silver.

The Church's Betrayal:

Mosén Millán's betrayal of Paco, despite their lifelong connection, symbolizes the Church's abandonment of the people in favor of the wealthy elite. His passivity and "closed eyes" represent a refusal to acknowledge the atrocities committed.



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3. NARRATIVE STRUCTURE AND SYMBOLISM:

Dual Narrative:

The novel alternates between the present (Mosén Millán waiting in the sacristy) and the past (Paco's life recalled through the priest's memory). A third voice, the altar boy's ballad (*romance*), anticipates the tragic outcome.

Repetition and Motifs:

Recurring motifs like the priest's "closed eyes," the empty church ("No hay nadie"), and the colt roaming loose reinforce the themes of guilt, abandonment, and the disruption of natural order.

Tragic Determinism:

While the priest is static and passive, Paco is dynamic and active. However, like a tragic hero, Paco is doomed by forces he cannot overcome. The empty church at the end signifies the people's ultimate judgment and rejection of the complicit clergy.

PART 2: TOPICS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

The Role of the Church:

Analyze Mosén Millán's character. Is he a villain, a coward, or a victim of circumstance? How does Sender use him to critique the role of the Catholic Church during the Civil War?

Symbolism of the Empty Church:

Discuss the significance of the fact that no villagers attend the requiem mass, only the three rich men and the colt. What does this silence say about memory and justice?

Paco as a Hero:

How is Paco portrayed? Is he a political revolutionary or a natural leader seeking basic justice? Discuss the autobiographical elements Sender imbues in Paco (e.g., the scene in the caves).

The Function of the Romance:

How does the altar boy's ballad function within the narrative? How does it contrast with Mosén Millán's internal monologue?

Guilt and Memory:

How does the novel explore the concept of guilt? Does Mosén Millán truly repent, or is he merely seeking to absolve himself through ritual?

Allegory of Spain:

Discuss the novel as an allegory. Identify the specific social and political forces represented by the main characters (Don Valeriano, Sr. Cástulo, La Jerónima).

PART 3: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- **Sender, Ramón J.** *Réquiem por un campesino español*. Stockcero.
- **Carr, Raymond.** *The Spanish Civil War: A History*.
- **Peñuelas, Marcelino.** *La obra narrativa de Ramón J. Sender*. Gredos, 1971.
- **Rodríguez-Gutiérrez, Borja.** "Introducción" to *Réquiem por un campesino español*. (This edition).



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- **Triana-Toribio, Núria.** (On film adaptations of the novel, if relevant to discussion).

PART 4: QUIZ BANK (Multiple Choice)

1. Who is the author of *Réquiem por un campesino español*?

- A) Federico García Lorca
- B) Ramón J. Sender
- C) Camilo José Cela
- D) Miguel de Unamuno

Correct Answer: B

2. What was the original title of the novel when it was published in 1953?

- A) *Paco el del Molino*
- B) *La Guerra Civil*
- C) *Mosén Millán*
- D) *El Réquiem*

Correct Answer: C

3. In the allegorical reading of the novel, what does Mosén Millán represent?

- A) The Spanish Republic
- B) The Spanish Church
- C) The Military
- D) The Peasantry

Correct Answer: B

4. Why does Mosén Millán keep his eyes closed for much of the novel?

- A) He is blind.
- B) He is tired from old age.
- C) It symbolizes his refusal to see and acknowledge reality and his own guilt.
- D) He is meditating deeply.

Correct Answer: C

5. Who are the only people to attend the requiem mass for Paco?

- A) The entire village.
- B) Paco's family.
- C) The three wealthy men who were complicit in his death.
- D) A group of Republican soldiers.

Correct Answer: C

Explore the “Spain in Crisis” Collection: This book is part of our comprehensive collection on the Spanish Civil War and its literary legacy: *Réquiem por un campesino español* (Sender); *Imán* (Sender); *La Barbarie Organizada* (Galán); *Vida de Fermín Galán* (Díaz Fernández & Arderíus); and *Red October in Asturias* (Díaz Fernández).

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