

IAM Readers Guild

Death Comes for the Archbishop

By Willa Cather

1. What problems confronted the priests when they came to New Mexico? Site specific examples from the book.
2. Compare Father Latour and Father Vaillant. Whom do you believe is the better man? Who is the better priest? Is there a difference?
3. How did Latour go about imparting discipline to the corrupt Catholicism of the southwest? Describe some of the priest lives that needed to be reformed. How does he overcome the bad stigma the natives attached to the priesthood because of his corrupt predecessors?
4. Discuss the superstition attached to many objects and religious practices in the southwest? What point do you think Cather was trying to make about that? What about her mention of the mention of disease-- the measles in the Pecos Mountain village?
5. Discuss similarities/differences between the indian's traditions and the Catholic faith.
6. Discuss the corruption personified by Padre Antonio Jose Martinez.