

Author's Notes for
When Sorrow Takes Wing by Kelly Romo

When Sorrow Takes Wing is based on true historic events, it is fictional and in no way represents all sides of the issues involved. Other than the famous or historical figures, events, and places represented in the novel, the principal characters contained within it are pure inventions. I did my best to stick to historical accuracy, but there are places where I used artistic license where facts could not be found or where the story necessitated me doing so.

It is estimated that 25,000 women were part of the Joan of Arc Women's Brigade between 1926 and 1929, without a single recorded defection. The network of women stretched from Guadalajara to Mexico City, including fifty-four villages and surrounding hamlets, who all provided monthly reports. They were professional women and rural women who fought for their religion and encouraged their husbands and sons to fight. A majority of the women were between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five.

The women and girls were recruited from all social classes, but were mostly working girls and peasant girls from the country. The brigades were organized just like a military with: generals, colonels, majors, lieutenants, captains, sergeants, and soldiers. The women smuggled food, supplies, and ammunition to the Cristeros. They not only transmitted information, they obtained it by setting up dances in the villages for the federal officers. The women were spies and they resorted to violence, kidnapping, and executions in order to protect the combatants. They also set up field hospitals and an underground hospital in Guadalajara where many of the Catholic nuns were in hiding as nurses. They worked with the Unión Popular, publishing propaganda and running an underground press.

This novel concentrated on the Women's Brigades, not the Cristeros fighting in the field. The bands of Cristeros rose up independently of one another, fighting in small bands until they were organized by generals who fought in the Revolutionary War. In three years, around 90,000 combatants died. The deaths between the Cristeros and the federal soldiers was about equal. When civilian casualties are included, the number is estimated at 200,000 deaths.

As stated at the end of my story, the peace treaty only appeased the masses, getting them to lay down their arms. The day after the peace, the government began to hunt down and kill all the Cristero leaders and they placed detachments in the villages. Between 1929 and 1935, they killed around 5,000 Cristero leaders and combatants.

After a respite, the government, still under the control of Plutarco Elías Calles, reinstated the anti-clerical laws of the constitution, persecuting priests and Christians again. They also instituted a 'socialist education' for the schools. Bands of Cristeros remained, and bitter at the church bishops for mollifying the masses, they fled to the hills and fought against the government, schoolteachers, and *agaristas*—but it never became the mass uprising as the first *Cristiada*. The final step of removing the anti-clerical laws from the constitution was not achieved until 1992.

Below is a list of the priests and laymen beautified or canonized by various Popes for their martyrdom during the Cristero War:

Beatified 1988 by Pope John Paul II

- Bl. Miguel Pro (1891-1927)

Beatified 1997 by Pope John Paul II

- Mateo Elías Nieves Castillo (1882-1928)

Canonized 2000 by Pope John Paul II

- Cristóbal Magallanes Jara (1869–1927)

- Román Adame Rosales (1859–1928)
- Rodrigo Aguilar Alemán (1875–1927)
- Julio Álvarez Mendoza (1866–1927)
- Luis Batis Sáinz (1870–1926)
- Agustín Caloca Cortés (1898–1927)
- Mateo Correa Magallanes (1866–1927)
- Atilano Cruz Alvarado (1901–1928)
- Miguel De La Mora (1874–1927)
- Pedro Esqueda Ramirez (1897–1927)
- Margarito Flores Garcia (1899–1927)
- José Isabel Flores Varela (1866–1927)
- David Galván Bermudes (1882–1915)
- Salvador Lara Puente (1905–1926)
- Pedro de Jesús Maldonado (1892–1937)
- Jesús Méndez Montoya (1880–1928)
- Manuel Morales (1898–1926)
- Justino Orona Madrigal (1877–1928)
- Sabas Reyes Salazar (1879–1927)
- José María Robles Hurtado (1888–1927)
- David Roldán Lara (1907–1926)
- Toribio Romo González (1900–1928)
- Jenaro Sánchez Delgadillo (1886–1927)
- Tranquilino Ubiarco Robles (1899–1928)
- David Uribe Velasco (1888–1927)

Beatified 2005 by Pope Benedict XVI

- Anacleto González Flores (1888-1927)
- José Dionisio Luis Padilla Gómez (1899-1927)
- Jorge Ramon Vargas González (1899-1927)
- Ramón Vicente Vargas González (1905-1927)
- José Luciano Ezequiel Huerta Gutiérrez (1880-1927)
- Salvador Huerta Gutiérrez (1880-1927)
- Miguel Gómez Loza (1888-1928)
- Luis Magaña Servín (1902-1928)
- Jose Trinidad Rangel Montano (1887-1927)
- Andreas Sola y Molist C.F.M. (1895-1927)
- Leonardo Pérez Larios (1883-1927)
- Darío Acosta Zurita (1908-1931)

Canonized 2016 by Pope Frances

- José Sánchez del Río (1913-1928)