

## Document Citation

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**LEON MORIN, PRETRE** LÉON MORIN, PRIEST  
France/Italy 1961. *Dir* Jean-Pierre Melville *Scen* Jean-Pierre Melville based on the novel by Béatrix Beck *Photog* Henri Decaë *Art Dir* Daniel Guéret *Mus* Martial Solal, Albert Raisner *Ed* Monique Bonnot *Cast* Jean-Paul Belmondo, Emmanuèle Riva *Prod* Rome-Paris Films. 117 mins.

During the German Occupation of France a young widow (Riva) who is a Communist and anticlerical meets a young, handsome priest (Belmondo) and a warm relationship develops. She falls in love with him and tries to make him break his vow of celibacy, but he resists and, when the war ends, they part.

This edifying work justifies Pierre Kast's statement in 1953 that "A good film could certainly be made from *Léon Morin, prêtre*." [Melville himself says: "Between you and me there are only two or three ideas that belong to me. It's a film of prudence, smooth and perfect, as comfortable in its moral as in its technique." Riva succeeds admirably in conveying the inner turmoil of the woman, but Belmondo lacks the spiritual authority that his role demands.]