

The Priest who Stole Silver from a Cross

*Whoever mocks God and his Mother
truly deserves to come to grief.*

On this theme, if you will hear me, I will tell, as I heard it,
a very fine miracle which I believe really happened,
which was done by our Lady who was of the line of good King David;
and a miracle as good as this should be told far and wide.

It happened in Hita, a town which is
in the Kingdom of Toledo, a well fortified place,
in the church of the mother of God, who takes pleasure
in granting us favours, and helps us whenever we need it.

A parish priest lived there who made a show
of holiness in public, but it was all deceit:
his words were worthy but, as I will show you,
if you will, his heart was full of evil.

Whenever he could he eagerly went a-thieving
and, as I heard, from his own church he stole
a large silver-covered cross, and stripped
the silver from it, to give to a mistress.

The next day, as was his wont, he went to the church
and wept as he showed the cross to the people, and pretended
that he had no knowledge of the theft, and he
dissembled, saying aloud, "If any man or woman knows

how this happened, and does not declare it, may God
vent his full wrath on them, and may they lose their sight".
And he said, "O blessed Virgin, by one of your miracles
show us who did this deed, if anyone will not say

'Pater noster' for this cause, let God punish them."
And after they all said the prayer, our Lady who watches over the world
blinded him in both eyes, so that he could see nothing
nor could any French medicine help him.

Not only this, he suffered another great injury
for his nose grew so big that it came down
over his mouth, and stretched so far on each side
that it touched his ears. And to tell the whole of it

he could barely eat or drink anything
unless someone first lifted up his great nose for him;
and he longed for death a thousand times a day.
And so you would be mad indeed not to give thanks

to the glorious Virgin, Queen of Heaven,
who did not take this man's life but left such a mark on him
that all who saw him thereafter would keep from doing evil,
for this is what rightly awaits anyone who slights her.