

Gran piadad' e mercee e nobreza

Alfonso el Sabio (Alfonso X), King of Castille and León (1221-1284)

Trans. Carol Anne Perry Lagemann (SCA Kasha Alekseeva)

How Holy Mary cured the woman whose husband had struck her because he could not have his way with her.*

Great com- pas - sion, no - bi - li - ty and mild - ness: These vir - tues al -

6
- ways the Vir - gin has shown, So that cru - el - ty, wick - ed - ness and wild -

12
- ness, And vile a - buse She will ne - ver con - done. 1. By the way, the
2. When she saw the
3. This will hap - pen
4. Then the gra - cious

18
- Ho - ly Queen, Vir - gin³ Ma - ry, Made a mi - ra - cle I'm ea -
- Vir - gin, she was so fright - ened She could hard - ly e - ven stand
- if you stay as a maid - en, All your life, with - out a trace
- Vir - gin Ma - ry de - part - ed, And the girl re - mained with plans

23
- ger to tell, She ap - peared be - fore a young and un³ - wa -
- on her feet, But the Vir - gin stepped so soft that she bright -
- of dis - grace, Ne - ver lewd or with in - i - qui - ty la -
- in her head, Pleased and hap - py, full of joy and light - heart -

28
- ry Girl who'd gone to play out - side for a spell In
- ened When She said, "From me fear no - thing, my sweet, ened Just
- den. This is why I come to show you My face. Said
- ed, And in - side her heart swore ne - ver to wed. But

33
- the walled - up gar - den, ver - dant and air - y, In
- be - lieve and you will soon be en - light - ened Where
- the girl, "Oh Queen, whose Name I have prayed in, I'll
- her fa - ther all her fu - ture had chart - ed. He

37
- her fa - ther's house in Ar - ras a lone.
- you'll meet Me and My Son on His throne.
- o - bey You, since Your wish - es are known."
- a mar - riage would no long - er post - pone.

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* Trans. Kathleen Kulp-Hill, "Songs of Holy Mary of Alfonso X, the Wise"

“Gran piadad' e mercee e nobreza” ▪ *Cantigas de Santa Maria* no. 105

5. “To a rich Auvergne man you’ll be connected,”
Said her father. “Very wealthy you’ll be.
He, my dear, is very rich and respected.”
But the girl replied, “Queen Mary chose me,
And of course the marriage must be rejected;
I’ve vowed to belong to Mary alone.”

6. But her parents scorned the tears she was shedding,
And against her will they promised her hand.
When the time arrived, they hosted a wedding.
When at last the banquet ended, as planned,
Bride and groom were left alone in the bedding,
To amuse themselves with no chaperone.

7. Hear now how the girl was saved in that hour
By the Virgin’s miracles and Her might:
Though she was completely in this man’s power,
Though he tried, he could not take her that night.
She remained, as always, pure as a flower,
With no need to wear a veil or atone.

8. In this way they lived a year long, however,
He could never have his way with his wife.
In a fury, he gave up the endeavor,
And instead he nearly ended her life.
With a knife he struck her somewhere I’d never
Name aloud here, for the shame I would own.

9. So unspeakable that none can depict it!
All the doctors in all Pisa in vain
Tried to stop the blood, but could not restrict it.
Of the man’s abuse she went to complain
And the bishop, hearing how he’d inflict it,
Felt for her and found what facts could be known.

10. In the end, because he didn’t desire
To make strife between a husband and wife,
The good bishop sent her back to his ire.
But at once, I swear to God, on my life,
Her vile spouse came down with Saint Martial’s fire,
And he fiercely burned and cried and fell prone.

11. All the people of the town caught the burning
And were brought to church, if they had not died,
Packed so tightly there that those who were yearning
For assistance could not fit there inside.
Malady brought by the evil concerning
That young man’s cruel deeds is what made them moan.

12. That poor girl whose savage spouse had debased her
Suffered from the rash along with the rest,
Feeling fever, chills, and pain that encased her,
For the lesions had inflamed her right breast.
In the church, more dead than living, they placed her,
Wrapped in woolen cloth of gray and grave tone.

13. When she woke, she cried out, sad and disgusted,
Saying, “Holy Mary, why did You fail?
Why betray me, though in You I have trusted?
Not enlightenment, as You told the tale,
But this wound You gave me, and I’m encrusted
With a fire that consumes to the bone.”

14. Then, exhausted so from moaning and wailing,
This poor girl at blessed last fell asleep.
Right away, the Queen of Queens with unfailing
Mercy came and told her no more to weep.
She said, “I bring remedies for prevailing,
By which plague and fire are overthrown.”

15. “Rise; get up; for you will no longer grapple
With your pain, for from today you are cured.
By My altar sleep, and wake in the chapel;
And a single kiss from you, be assured,
Then will make a person sound as an apple,
Cured of plague that makes them whimper and groan.”

16. “All this,” said the girl, “believe I completely,
But how can I lift my body and stand?”
Holy Mary then reached out for her sweetly,
And She raised her, saying, “Give Me your hand.”
And the girl knew from her body concretely
That both wicked wound and fire had flown.

17. As the dawn arrived, the girl was discovered
When they went to wake her up from her doze.
And, amazed, they asked how she had recovered.
Nothing did she scruple then to disclose.
Over her with broth and grape juice they hovered
Speaking softly in a comforting tone.

18. Then they brought the sick so if what she swore her
Ears had heard was true they’d prove it in fact.
When she kissed them, they were healed right before her.
They began to praise the Queen for this act
Of Her mercy, bowing down to adore Her.
Soon throughout the land this wonder was known.