

# Our Lady of High Grace (Altagracia)

Feast: January 21



## Our Lady of Altagracia

Also known as:

Our Lady of Grace

Our Lady of High Grace

Protector and Queen of the hearts of Dominicans

Virgen de la Altagracia

Virgin of Altagracia

Feast Day: 6 January

Memorial Day: 21 January

Patronage: The Dominican Republic

Our Lady of Altagracia is portrait of the Virgin Mary in a Nativity scene. It is 13 inches (33 centimeters) wide by 18 inches (45 centimeters) high, and is painted on cloth. It is a primitive work of the Spanish school, painted c.1500. The Spanish brothers Alfonso and Antonio Trejo, two of the first European settlers on Santo Domingo, brought the portrait to the island some time prior to 1502, and eventually donated it to the parish church at Higüey. It's first shrine was finished in 1572, and in 1971 it was moved to its present Basilica. The image was crowned on 15 August 1922 during the pontificate of Pius XI. Due to its age, centuries of handling by the faithful, and exposure to candle smoke, it was in sad shape, and was restored in 1978. On 25 January 1979 by Pope John Paul II who crowned the image with a gold and silver tiara, his gift to the Virgin. It's frame is made of gold, enamel and precious stones, and was constructed by an unknown 18th century artisan.

The Dominicans see the image as exemplifying Our Lady watching over the island and the growth of Christianity there. The feast day is marked by services, all-night vigils, singing, dancing, and festivals in many of the towns.

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Legend says that the pious daughter of a rich merchant asked him to bring her a portrait of Our Lady of Altagracia from Santo Domingo, but no one had heard of that title. The merchant, staying overnight at a friend's house in Higüey, described his problem as they sat outdoors after dinner. An old man with a long beard, who just happened to be passing by, pulled a rolled up painting from his bundle, gave it to the merchant, and said, "This is what you are looking for." It was the Virgin of Altagracia. They gave the old man a place to stay for the night, but by dawn he was gone, not to be seen again. The merchant placed the image on their mantle, but it repeatedly disappeared only to be found outside. They finally returned it to the church.



## Novena to the Virgin of Altagracia

Oh, Dearest Mother, Sweetest Virgin of Altagracia, our Patroness.

Look at us here, prostrate in your presence, desiring to offer you this novena as a testimony of our love for you and in thanksgiving for the innumerable favors that we have received from your hands.

You are our Advocate and to you we recommend our needs.

You are our Teacher and like disciples we come to learn from the example of your holy life.

You are our Mother, and like children, we come to offer you all of the love of our hearts. Receive, dearest Mother, our offerings and listen attentively to our supplications. Amen

[Here ask for one of the graces you would like to obtain from the Holy Virgin of Altagracia]

Supplications

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1. Oh sweetest Mother of Altagracia,  
all pure and Immaculate from your Conception! We  
beseech you to bless us, your children, with the grace  
to love the purity you practiced and to preserve the  
innocence of our children. Hail Mary...

2. Oh sweetest Mother of Altagracia,  
admirable model of Christian mothers and wives in the  
humble house of Nazareth, we beseech you to bless our  
homes, making them flourish in the holiness of  
matrimony. Hail Mary...

3. Oh sweetest Mother of Altagracia,  
you received into your arms the Holy Infant who died  
for us on the Cross, we give you all of our  
sufferings, so that at the hour of our death we may  
die with the name of Jesus on our lips and in our  
hearts, and fly to heaven with the help of your  
maternal arms. Hail Mary ...

Final Prayer

Holy Virgin of Altagracia!

From your hands and your maternal heart we receive  
each day the sustenance that you give to us from Our  
Father in heaven.

You are our defense in danger, our indispensable help in our necessities and our hope in the  
sacrifices required of the Christian life.

Through your Immaculate Heart we desire to pay tribute  
to God with a hymn of thanksgiving for all the  
benefits you have distributed.

We promise you, Oh Mother, gratitude and fidelity.

You will always reign in our homes and in our town,  
where all venerate you as Our Lady and Mother, you who  
make all virtues increase and thrive.

We are honored to be called your children.

We hope to finish our lives serving God and you until  
we reach the highest grace possible, the grace you  
will help us to attain, the great gift of heaven  
itself. Amen