



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS
TO THE PEOPLE OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC TO MARK THE ALTAGRACIAN JUBILEE
YEAR**

I greet with affection the brothers and sisters of the beloved Dominican Republic, who are preparing to celebrate, with love and gratitude, the centenary of the canonical coronation of Our Lady of Altagracia, Mother and Protectress of your people. This Marian devotion, so deeply felt by you, is a sign of the Christian roots that characterise and give life to your land. Therefore, I urge you not to lose heart in your witness of faith, to nurture and strengthen, through the example and intercession of the Virgin Mary, your love for Jesus and for the Church. In this event, so important for the Dominican nation, I wished to send as my representative Archbishop Edgar Peña Parra, Substitute of the Secretariat of State, whom I have also asked to place the filial homage of the Pope, symbolised by the golden rose, at the feet of our Mother of Altagracia.

God gives us in the Virgin a sign of his closeness and of the infinite tenderness with which he cares for us. The loving gaze of the Mother contemplating the Child who sleeps trustfully on her lap is an invitation for us to learn to see, through her eyes, Jesus present in our neighbours, and to remember that we are part of the same human family called to live together in fraternity and solidarity. The Virgin of Altagracia has been for the Dominican people a source of unity in difficult moments, a sure hand that supports them in the setbacks that arise in their daily lives. With her protection and shelter, she urges us to care for and keep burning the flame of hope that our elders bequeathed to us in faith, and to pass it on to others with humility, trusting in the Lord's grace.

Dear Dominican brothers and sisters, do not be afraid to walk together, overcoming divisions and mistrust, united in fraternity, in the direction that Jesus indicates in the Gospel. Do not hesitate to seek God's will in simplicity, for he is a Father of tenderness who embraces all and never abandons us. Trust that his divine light transforms hearts and leads them to an encounter with him and with their brothers and sisters; and have faith that the power of the Holy Spirit impels you to carry out with joy and constancy works of love and goodness for those who need them most.

May Jesus bless you and Our Lady of Altagracia protect and accompany you. And please do not forget to pray for me.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 15 July 2022

Fraternally yours,

Francis

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