



Dionisio Fierros Álvarez

Ballota, Asturias, 1827 – Madrid, 1894

Friar Ramón Martínez Vigil

1893

Oil on canvas

231.5 × 123 cm

The figure we are looking at is **Ramón Martínez Vigil**, a Dominican friar who later became the Bishop of Oviedo, and was also a theologian, writer, university rector, senator and lexicographer. He is one of the most important figures in Covadonga's recent history, as he oversaw a wide-ranging reform of the sanctuary. Here, he is depicted standing up, dressed in a **blue cassock, surplice, white cape and red cloak**, and is accompanied by a drawing which, with feigned carelessness, appears to have been folded over the edge of the table on which his right hand is resting. The drawing consists of a view of the main façade of the nearby Basilica of Covadonga, which was the brainchild of the bishop and which he himself consecrated. Below the drawing we see the bishop's coat of arms, and above it are several books and a **biretta** with a green tassel, which identifies its owner as a **Royal Chaplain**.

The subject of this portrait is presented with all of the richness, elegance and colour that characterises the Venetian school of painting, which was greatly admired by the portrait's creator, the Asturian artist **Dionisio Fierros**.

The painting also features a number of other skilfully presented details: the bishop is wearing decorations, such as the **Grand Cross of Military Merit** and the **Cross of the Order of Isabella the Catholic**, with its white and gold sash. He is also wearing an **episcopal ring** and an **opulent cross around his neck** encrusted with amethysts and diamonds. In his will, the bishop bequeathed these items to Our Lady of Covadonga, and they are on display next to the painting in this very room.