

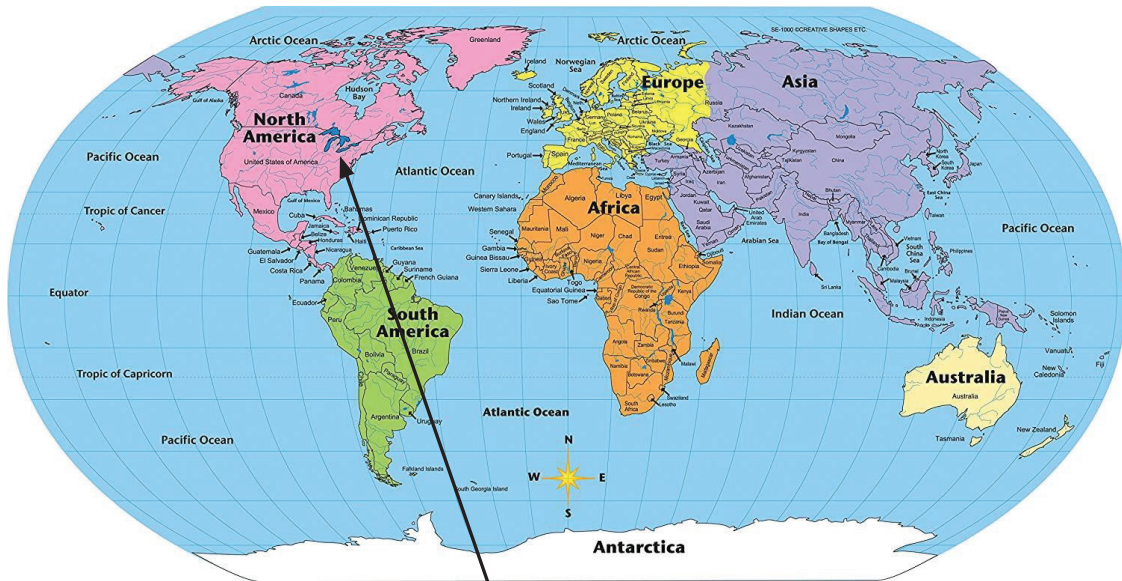


## BISHOP BARBARA HARRIS

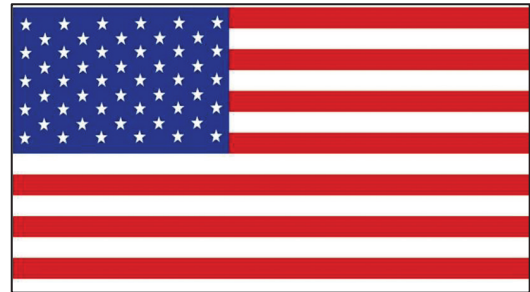
*The Rt. Rev. Barbara C. Harris, 2002, Portrait in oil by Simmie Knox.*

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# Bishop Barbara



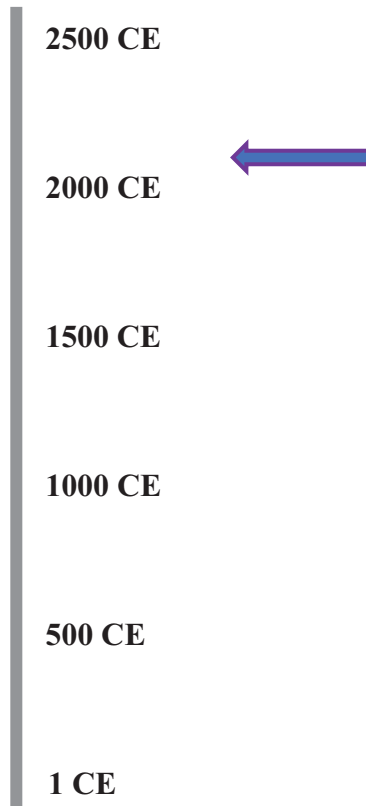
**The United States, Bishop Barbara Harris's Country**



**The Flag of the United States**

# Harris

Bishop Barbara Harris (D. 2020)



## **Bishop Barbara Harris**

This is the story of Bishop Barbara Harris. We remember her during the time of the color purple. Purple is the color of Lent, but it is also the color that bishops wear. It helps us remember she was a bishop.

A bishop cares for and guides the priests and people in a big place called a “diocese.” Bishops carry a shepherd’s staff, called a “crozier,” to show that they are trying their best to be a Good Shepherd to the people.

Not everyone thought that a woman could be a bishop. Many others thought, “Why not?”

In those days it was still unusual in the United States for an African American to be a bishop, but again, many thought, “Why not?”

This Black woman bishop worked as hard as anyone to care for and guide the people in her diocese. She cared most for those she called “the least, the lost, and the left out.”

When Barbara was growing up, her mother played the organ at St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, an African American Church in Philadelphia. The whole family loved music.

Her mother took care of other people’s laundry to help pay for Barbara’s piano and singing lessons. Barbara especially loved the old hymns she heard and sang in church.

When Barbara grew up, she loved to play the piano and sing the hymns she now knew by heart. Even when she was just talking to people or preaching in a church, the words from hymns filled up her talking.

Barbara loved to go to church and helped teach Sunday school, work with the youth, and even took people from her church to march for freedom with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Selma, Alabama.

She also spent her Sunday afternoons praying and talking with people who were in jail.

Barbara didn't become a priest until she was fifty years old, so what she said and did had been thought about for a long time. She was a small person who did big things.

Barbara carried with her a piece of paper to help her do what had to be done. It gave her courage and hope. It said, "The Power behind you is greater than any obstacle ahead of you." She knew that with God she could do anything.

When Bishop Barbara became old and full of years, she died. People celebrated her life and remembered her as the first woman bishop in her part of the Christian church, but they also knew she always worked hard for others, especially “for the least, the lost, and the left out.”

I wonder what parts of Bishop Barbara Harris' story you like the best?

I wonder what part is most important?

I wonder what part is like you or where you might be in the story?

I wonder what part of the story we could leave out and still have all the story we need?