

Episcopalians ordain first Latina bishop: Will serve Olympia, Washington, diocese

News in the [February 22, 2005](#) issue

Bavi Edna Rivera, a priest from California, became the first woman Latino-heritage bishop in the Episcopal Church when she was ordained last month as the suffragan, or assistant, bishop for the Diocese of Olympia, Washington.

Nedi, as she prefers to be called, is the 12th woman elevated to the episcopacy. Her path might have been hard to predict inasmuch as her father, retired Bishop Victor M. Rivera, who served the San Joaquin, California, diocese from 1968 to 1988, was an outspoken opponent of women's ordination.

Yet, on January 22 in Bellevue, Washington, the elder Rivera "movingly, at her consecration . . . bestowed his bishop's cope—a long semicircular cloak—on his daughter," reported columnist Joel Connelly of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. Another 20 bishops also took part in the rites.

Born in 1946 to a Puerto Rican father and Anglo mother, Rivera had been rector of St. Aidan Episcopal Church in San Francisco since 1994. She was ordained a priest in 1976, and she and her father "agreed to disagree about the issue" over the years, according to the Episcopal News Service.