

Reflections

International
Catholic Family Newsletter
March 2022

Volume 80

Bringing Light Into a World of Darkness

The Church For Sinners
The Novena That Takes 12 years
Christians in India

February 25, 2022 - Monthly Medjugorje Message from Our Blessed Mother

"Dear children! I am with you and we pray together. Help me with prayer, little children, that Satan may not prevail. His power of death, hatred, and fear has visited the earth. Therefore, little children, return to God and to prayer, to fasting and to renunciation, for all those who are downtrodden, poor, and have no voice in this world without God. Little children, if you do not return to God and His Commandments, you do not have a future. That is why He sent me to you to guide you. Thank you for having responded to my call."

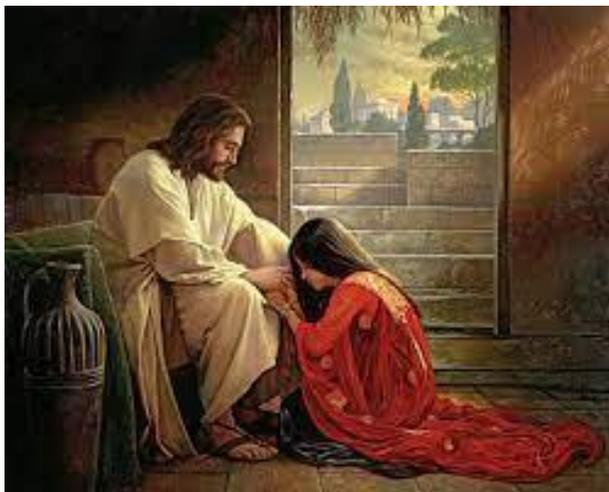




Titus 3:5

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

Don't wait any longer to ask Jesus to save you. You cannot win against the temptations of the world by yourself. You need to **change. Jesus is the answer. Ask Him to help you...and mean it !**



Jesus forgives Mary Magdalene

Blessing to All:

By: Richard Pickard

“Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do. I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.” (Mark 2:17)

Jesus came for us. All of us. Because we are all sinners. And He set up a Church through the Apostles and gave them authority to forgive sins. This is historically accurate as reflected in John Chapter 20:21-23.



“Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.”

Inside each of us, resides the spark of life that God gave us when we were conceived. This spark of life we call a soul. He also gave us a moral compass that is within each of us. When Adam and Eve were created their soul was pure and righteous. But something happened. They did something in disobedience to God.

We are not sure what that sin was. The bible says the first man and woman took a bite of an apple. Whatever happened, they removed themselves from

God's favor and the light within them was darkened. They chose to disobey God but did not lose His love for them. Like disobeying children who need to be disciplined, parents must take appropriate actions, all the while offering them unconditional love. God's love never diminishes because of our weaknesses. No matter what sin we commit. His love for us is so great that He offers forgiveness to us through His Son, Jesus Christ.



To this day, theologians around the world are still trying to figure out what really happened. What is original sin and how is it passed on to everyone born into the human race?

Since Adam and Eve were sinless in the beginning, how did sin enter into the picture?

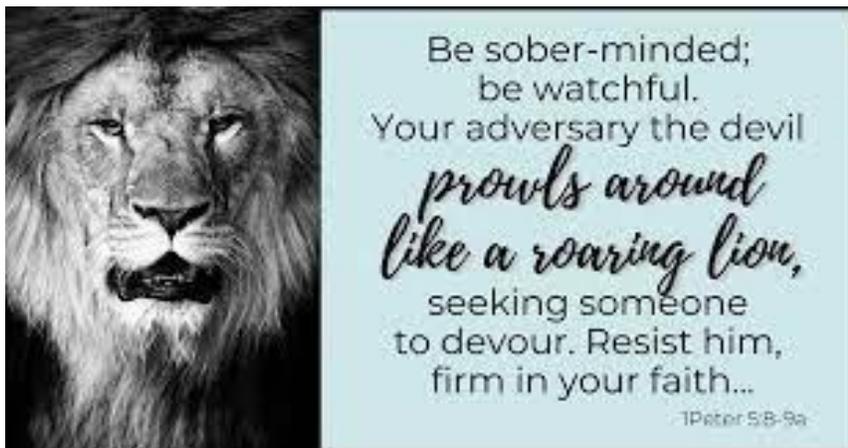
Something or someone brought sin into the world. From the bible we know that the original sinner was already at work. A fallen angel who we call Satan, lost his place in heaven. His sin was that of pride. He wanted to be like God. He wanted to be more than what he was created to be. Can you imagine the scene in heaven, when an angel, who was created pure, looked upon the Creator, and said, **"I want more! I want to create things and be in charge of my own kingdom."** What a disaster.



How and why Satan rebelled is a mystery. But what distinguishes Satan is that he is described as the most intelligent and calculating creature in all creation and, at some point in time, he took on an oppositional status against God and the children of God.

He lied to Adam and Eve, and they turned away from the truth of God's word. Satan's lie was in a sense, the same thing that he wanted. Satan said to them, "You will be like God. You can determine what is good or evil. You can be in charge of your own destiny."

From that lie, accepted by Adam and Eve, until this very day, Satan continues on his rampage to lie to humanity to bring souls into his dark kingdom.



He not only hates God but hates all that God has created. Satan wants the destruction of our souls and of the world itself. He prowls around looking to turn people against God by his lies.

Jesus said that Satan is the **father of lies**. Which means that Satan told the **"first"** lie to our first parents, Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Perhaps this is why he was thrown out of heaven. For we know from scripture, "nothing that is impure will enter [heaven], nor anyone who does shameful things or tells lies." (Rev 21:27)

Satan uses methods that test our moral strengths and weaknesses to see how to achieve his final result of causing the complete loss of grace in our souls. **All humans experience different types of temptations.** They might start innocently enough. A small lie or using impure language, but things will eventually escalate to higher sins. Especially sins of the flesh. We all have different weaknesses and **Satan is counting on us to stay away from prayer. He hates us talking to Jesus and His Blessed Mother.** Satan goal is to isolate us from Jesus and **to get us associated with others** that he has made slaves to sin. When we consent to Mortal sin, we are no longer children of God, but children of Satan. We are now a part of his kingdom.



God does not want us to be lost and suffer separation from Him. In His kindness, God provided us with a means to return to Him, through His son, Jesus Christ and His Church. **His cross is our salvation.** God would establish through a sinless Son, a **Church for Sinners.** This church would represent Christ on earth and the gates of hell would not prevail against it. **The doors are always open to sinners!**

Christ gave the power to forgive sins to the Apostles and all those that they gave authority to in succession. These Bishops of the early church, and their successors are given not only the unique ministry to forgive sins in Jesus' name, but also the power to retain sins.

Remember what Jesus said therefore to them again: **Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. When he had said this, he breathed on them; and he said to them: Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained (John 20:21-23)**

This must have made Satan go nuts! The early church bishops, priests (presbytery) could forgive sins! And each new bishop so consecrated by the Church and newly ordained priests (presbytery), are given the power through the action of the Holy Spirit, within them, to forgive sins.

A Church for Sinners? Satan works hard to get humans to lose the grace of God and now he finds out, that Jesus, became sin, who was sinless, to redeem us **SINNERS**. His crucifixion was a pure sacrifice for the sins of the world for all times. And then Jesus gave the power to forgive sins, through the Holy Spirit to the Apostles and their successors.

God loves sinners! But He loves us too much to leave us in our sins. Christ is the way out of our sinful life. Christ paid the price for all of us. All we have to do is acknowledge our sins and take advantage of the grace that Christ will give us. **Tell Christ you need His help, especially in sins of the flesh and those sins that continue to haunt you and that you repeat over and over again. Trust Jesus. He doesn't LIE.** He will help you! Why not give it a try? What have you to lose? You have eternity in Heaven to gain. Go to Confession. Jesus will help you!

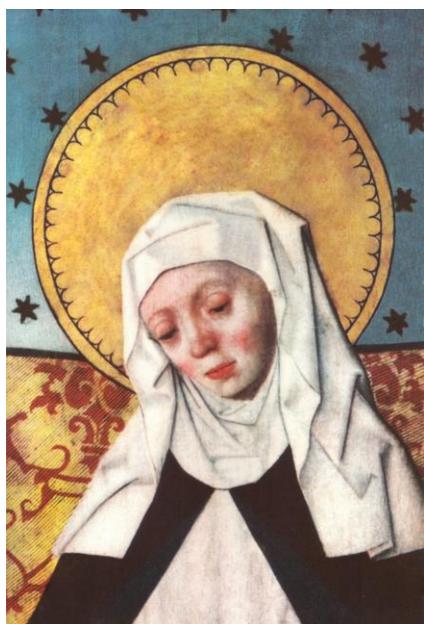




St Bridge of Sweden Novena That Takes 12 Years and The Promises Attached

By: Michelle La Rosa, The Pillar

If you're anything like most Catholics, you've got some experience with novenas, or have at least heard of them. They are nine-day series of prayers offered to saints or to Jesus and are a popular way among Catholics to ask for some grace, or some help with a vexing problem.



Most Catholics know it's usually easier to start a novena than to see it through for nine days. Now imagine praying one for 12 years. Meet St. Bridget of Sweden's 12 Year Prayers.

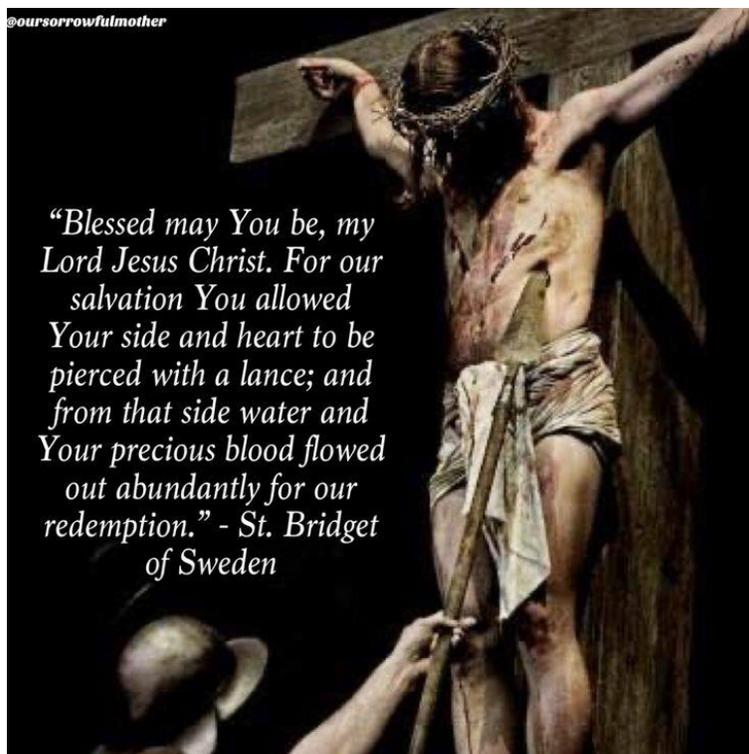
July 23 marks the feast of St. Bridget of Sweden, a 14th century mystic, widow, and religious sister. Bridget and her husband had eight children. After her husband's death, Bridget

founded the Order of the Most Holy Savior and lived the remainder of her life as a nun.

Throughout her life, Bridget experienced visions of Jesus, Mary, and various saints. Many of the visions involved the sufferings of Christ, and their contents were published following her death. It is piously believed that among the revelations received by St. Bridget was the 12 Year Prayers devotion.

The devotion consists of a series of prayers honoring the seven times Christ spilled his blood for the world - the circumcision, the agony in the garden, the scourging at the pillar, the crowning with thorns, the carrying of the cross, the crucifixion, and the piercing of Christ's side.

Christ himself is believed to have appeared to St. Bridget to teach her the prayers, as a special way to honor his sufferings, and to offer five promises to those who would pray them daily for 12 years.



The promises include:

- 1) The soul who prays them suffers no purgatory.
- 2) The soul who prays them will be accepted among the Martyrs as though he had spilled his blood for his faith.
- 3) The soul who prays them can choose three others whom Jesus will then keep in a state of grace sufficient to become holy.
- 4) No-one in the four successive generations of the soul who prays them will be lost.
- 5) The soul who prays them will be made conscious of his death one month in advance.

The 7 Prayers of St. Bridget Devotion for Twelve Years To Honor the 7 Times Jesus Spilled His Precious Blood for Us.

After each Prayer, One Our Father, One Hail Mary

Opening Prayer: O Jesus, now I wish to pray the Lord's Prayer seven times in unity with the love with which You sanctified this prayer in Your Heart. Take it from my lips into Your Divine Heart. Improve and complete it so much that it brings as much honor and joy to the Trinity as You granted it on earth with this prayer. May these pour upon Your Holy Humanity in Glorification to Your Painful Wounds and the Precious Blood that You spilled from them.

First Prayer - The Circumcision

Eternal Father, through Mary's unblemished hands and the Divine Heart of Jesus, I offer You the first wounds, the first pains, and the first Bloodshed as atonement for my and all of humanity's sins of youth, as protection against the first mortal sin, especially among my relatives. Amen.

Second Prayer - The Suffering on the Mount of Olives

Our Father ... Hail Mary Eternal Father, through Mary's unblemished hands and the Divine Heart of Jesus, I offer You the terrifying suffering of Jesus' Heart on the Mount of Olives and every drop of His Bloody Sweat as atonement for my and all of humanity's sins of the heart, as protection against such sins and for the spreading of Divine and brotherly Love. Amen.

Third Prayer - The Flogging

Eternal Father, through Mary's unblemished hands and the Divine Heart of Jesus, I offer You the many thousands of Wounds, the gruesome Pains, and the Precious Blood of the Flogging as atonement for my and all of humanity's sins of the Flesh, as protection against such sins and the preservation of innocence, especially among my relatives. Amen.

Fourth Prayer - The Crowning of Thorns

Eternal Father, through Mary's unblemished hands and the Divine Heart of Jesus, I offer You the Wounds, the Pains, and the Precious Blood of Jesus's Holy Head from the Crowning with Thorns as atonement for my and all of humanity's sins of the Spirit, as protection against such sins and the spreading of Christ's kingdom here on earth. Amen.

Fifth Prayer - The Carrying of the Cross

Eternal Father, through Mary's unblemished hands and the Divine Heart of Jesus, I offer You the Sufferings on the way of the Cross, especially His Holy Wound on His Shoulder and its Precious Blood as atonement for my and all of humanity's rebellion against the Cross, every grumbling against Your Holy Arrangements and all other sins of the tongue, as protection against such sins and for true love of the Cross. Amen.

Sixth Prayer - The Crucifixion

Eternal Father, through Mary's unblemished hands and the Divine Heart of Jesus, I offer You Your Son on the Cross, His Nailing and Raising, His Wounds on the Hands and Feet and the three streams of His Precious Blood that poured forth from these for us, His extreme tortures of the Body and Soul, His precious Death and its non-bleeding Renewal in all Holy Masses on earth as atonement for all wounds against vows and regulations within the Orders, as reparation for my and all of the world's sins, for the sick and the dying, for all holy priests and laymen, for the Holy Father's intentions toward the restoration of Christian families, for the strengthening of Faith, for our country and unity among all nations in Christ and His Church, as well as for the Diaspora. Amen.

Seventh Prayer - The Piercing of Jesus's Side

Eternal Father, accept as worthy, for the needs of the Holy Church and as atonement for the sins of all Mankind, the Precious Blood and Water which poured forth from the Wound of Jesus' Divine Heart. Be gracious and merciful toward us. Blood of Christ, the last precious content of His Holy Heart, wash me of all my and others' guilt of sin. Water from the Side of Christ, wash me clean of all punishments for sin and extinguish the flames of Purgatory for me and for all the Poor Souls. Amen



Christians in India

BY ARIANA MONIQUE SALAZAR, PEW RESEARCH ARTICLE ON INDIA



Christian devotees wearing face masks offer prayers at St. Mary's Basilica in Bengaluru on Dec. 24, 2020. (Manjunath Kiran/AFP via Getty Images)

Some say Christianity in India dates back to the earliest followers of Jesus in the first century C.E.(same as AD). Today, there are millions of Christians in the country, although they make up just 2.4% of India's massive population. South India is home to about half of the Christians in the country, and Christians make up a relatively large share of people in India's more sparsely populated Northeast, where the vast majority of Christians belong to tribal communities.

Here are eight key findings about Christians in India, according to a recent Pew Research Center report.

Among Indians, 0.4% of adults are Hindu converts to Christianity. Conversion is a contentious issue in India, and nine states have enacted laws against proselytism as of early 2021. While Christianity is

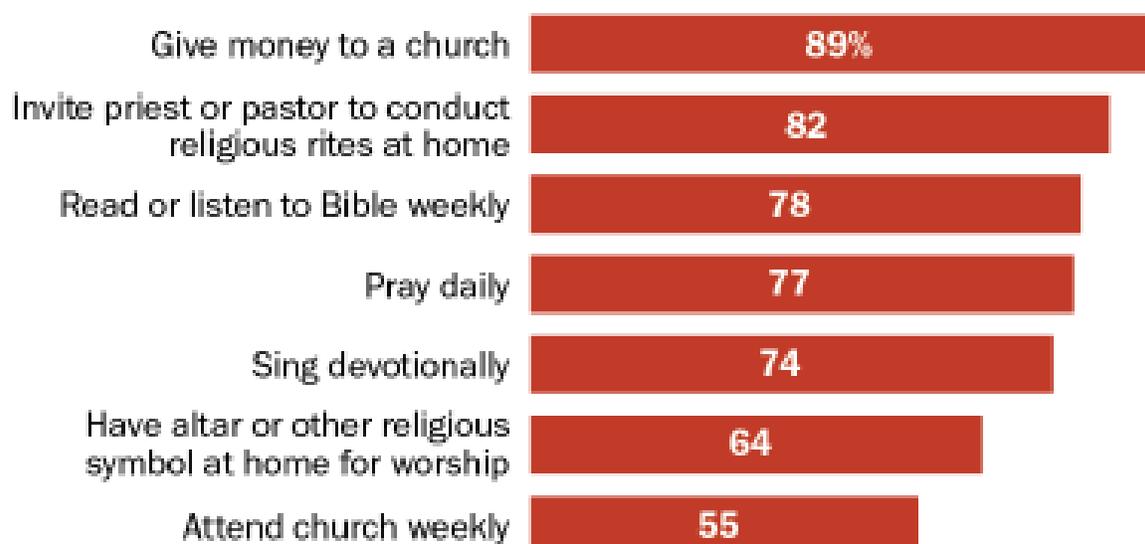
a proselytizing religion, many other religions in India are non-proselytizing, and religious conversion is rare in the country. Overall, just 2% of respondents report a different religion than the one in which they were raised, including 0.4% who are converts to Christianity. Christian converts in India mostly are former Hindus, but the survey also finds that Hindus tend to gain as many people as they lose through religious switching (0.7% of respondents were raised Hindu and now identify as something else, while 0.8% were raised as something else but now identify as Hindu). Christian converts in India are disproportionately located in the South, while some are also located in the East. Most converts say they belong to lower castes – that is, they identify with Scheduled Castes (sometimes known as Dalits), Scheduled Tribes or Other Backward Classes. Most converts also come from poor backgrounds – i.e., they report recently struggling to pay for food or other necessities.

There is no clear majority denomination among Indian Christians. While many Indian Christians identify as Catholic (37%), a variety of other denominations are present in India. For example, 13% of Indian Christians are Baptists, 7% identify with the Church of North India and another 7% identify with the Church of South India.

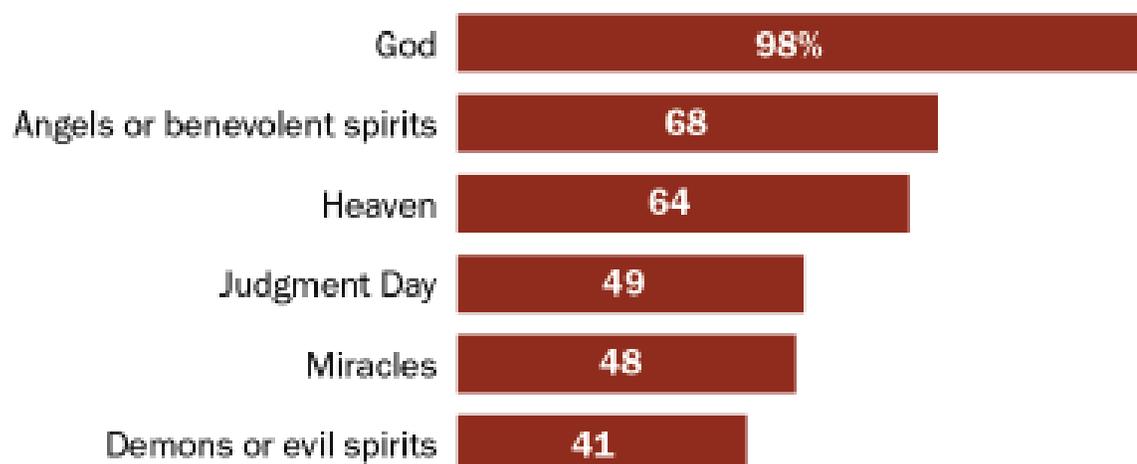


Most Indian Christians read or listen to the Bible regularly, but fewer hold some traditional beliefs

% of Indian Christians who ...



% of Indian Christians who believe in ...



Source: Survey conducted Nov. 17, 2019-March 23, 2020, among adults in India. See Methodology for details.

"Religion in India: Tolerance and Segregation"

Three-quarters of Indian Christians (76%) say religion is very important in their lives, and Indian Christians engage in a variety of traditional beliefs and practices. Nearly all Indian Christians (98%) say they believe in God, and Christians in India are more likely than most other religious communities to say they pray daily (77%). Most Indian Christians also attend church weekly (55%), and an overwhelming share give money to a church (89%). At the same time, even though 78% of Indian Christians say they read or listen to the Bible at least weekly, smaller shares say they hold several traditional beliefs rooted in the Bible, including belief in Judgment Day (49%) and miracles (48%).

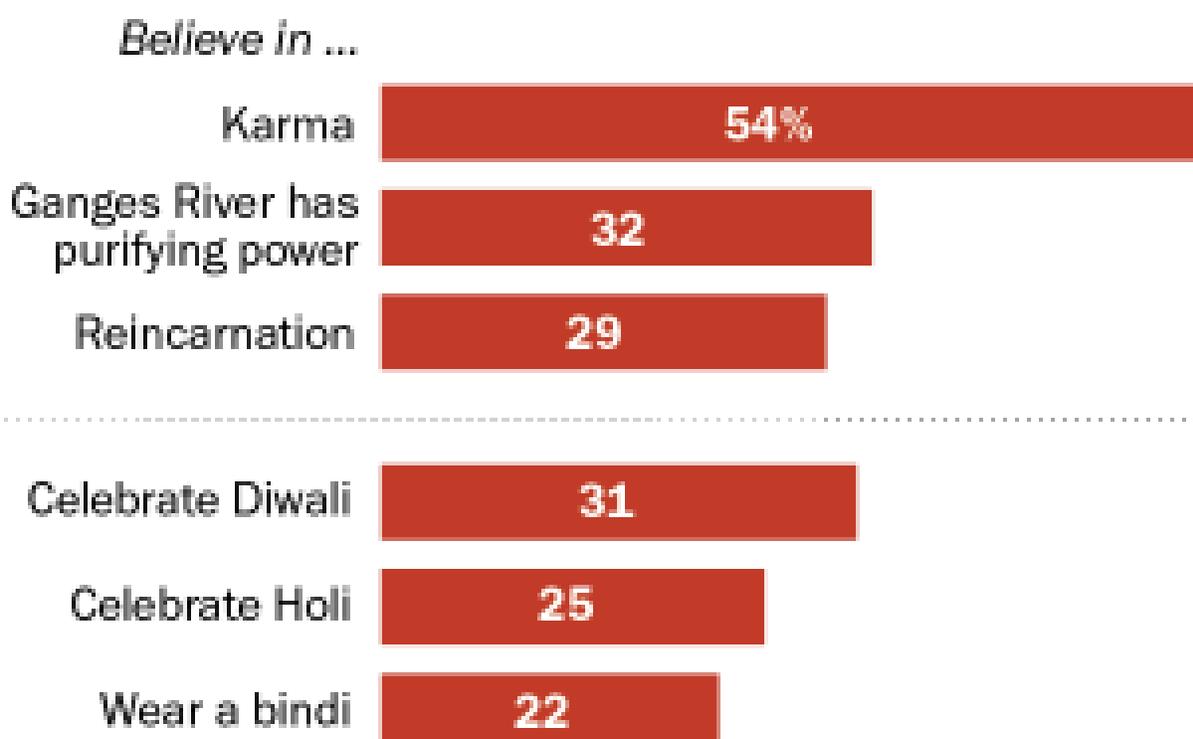


Mass numbers of Christians in India reading the Bible in Public.

They read the Bible often in private and in Church services.

Many Indian Christians hold beliefs, engage in practices not traditionally linked with Christianity

% of Indian Christians who ...



Note: Only women were asked about wearing a bindi.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 17, 2019-March 23, 2020, among adults in India. See Methodology for details.

“Religion in India: Tolerance and Segregation”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Substantial shares of Indian Christians follow religious practices and beliefs not traditionally associated with Christianity. Most Indian Christians say they believe in karma (54%), which is not rooted in the Christian religion. And many Indian Christians also believe in reincarnation (29%) and that the Ganges River has the power to purify (32%), both of which are core teachings in Hinduism. It is also somewhat common for Indian Christians to observe customs tied to other religions, like celebrating Diwali (31%) or wearing a forehead marking called a bindi (22%), most often worn by Hindu, Buddhist and Jain women.

Indian Christians disproportionately identify with lower castes (74%), including 57% with Scheduled Castes (SC) or Scheduled Tribes (ST). India's caste system is a social hierarchy that can dictate class and social life, including whom a person can marry. Today, regardless of their religion, Indians nearly universally identify with a caste category. Among Christians, 33% identify as SC, while 24% identify as ST. And Christians are somewhat more likely than the Indian population overall to say there is widespread caste discrimination in India. For example, among Indians overall, 20% say there is widespread discrimination against SCs in India, compared with 31% among Christians who say the same. A smaller share of Christians (18%) say there is a lot of discrimination against Christians in India, and even fewer say they have personally faced recent discrimination based on their caste (11%) or religion (10%).



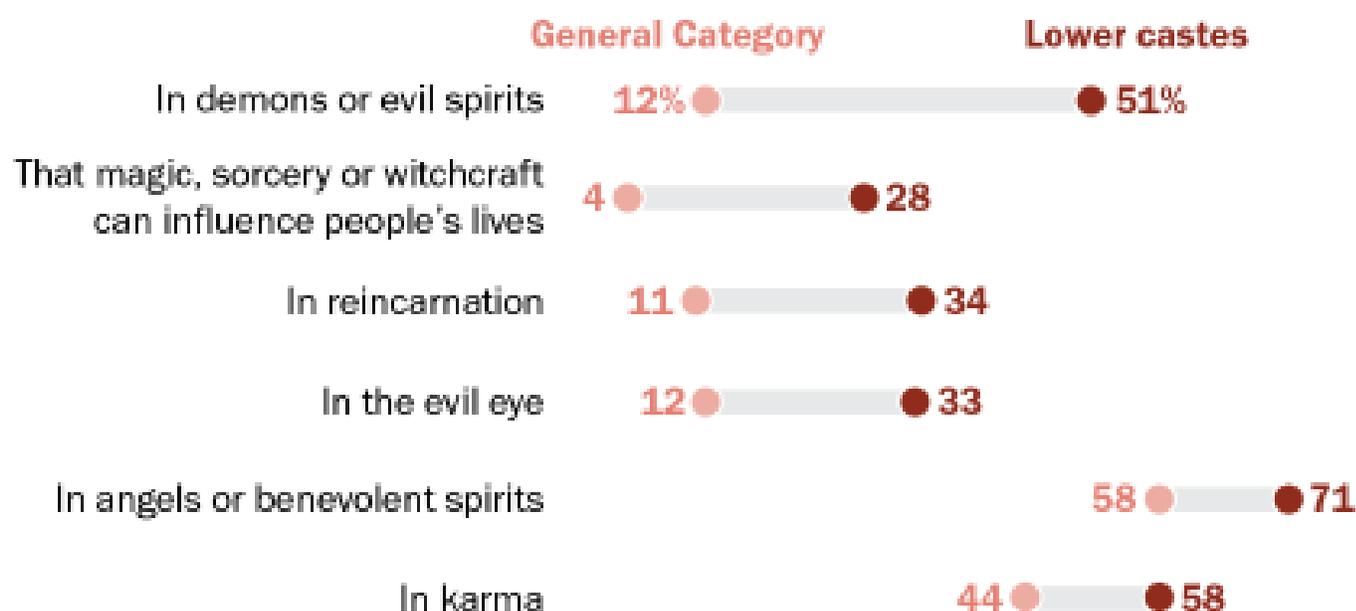
Photo of Scheduled Castes



Photo of Scheduled Tribes

Lower-caste Christians more likely to believe in demons, magic

% of Indian Christians who believe ...



Note: Lower castes include Scheduled Castes/Tribes as well as Other/Most Backward Classes.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 17, 2019-March 23, 2020, among adults in India. See Methodology for details.

"Religion in India: Tolerance and Segregation"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Lower-caste Indian Christians are much more likely than upper-caste (also called General Category) Christians to hold both Christian and non-Christian beliefs. Indian Christians who belong to SCs, STs and other lower castes tend to believe in angels and demons at significantly higher rates than upper-caste Christians. For example, roughly half of lower-

caste Christians (51%) believe in demons or evil spirits, while just 12% of higher-caste Christians hold this belief. Lower-caste Christians also are more likely than General Category Christians to believe in spiritual forces not generally associated with Christianity, like karma (58% vs. 44%) and the evil eye (33% vs. 12%).

Overall, Indian Christians are less prone toward religious segregation than some other groups. For instance, Christians are less likely than other religious groups to say that stopping interreligious marriage is “very important.” Among Christians, 37% say **stopping the interreligious marriage of Christian women is very important**, while 35% say the same about Christian men. In contrast, **roughly two-thirds of Hindus and an even greater share of Muslims say it is crucial to stop such marriages by men and women in their respective communities.** In addition, fewer Christians (22%) than Hindus (47%) and Muslims (45%) say *all* of their close friends share their religion. In part, these attitudes may reflect Christians’ regional concentration in the South, where opposition to interreligious marriage is generally less widespread and religious segregation overall is less pronounced.

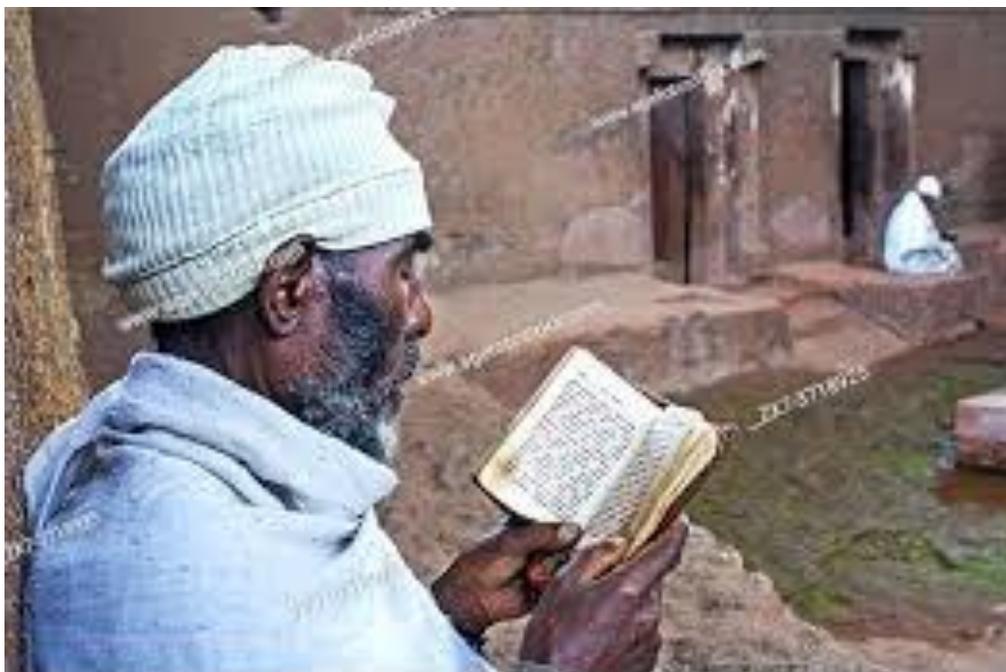


Politically, Christians favor the opposing Indian National Congress (INC) over the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which is led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and is often described as promoting a Hindu nationalist ideology. A plurality of Christian voters (30%) say they voted

for the INC in the 2019 parliamentary elections, which roughly matches the shares of Muslims and Sikhs who voted for the INC. Just one-in-ten Indian Christian voters say they voted for the BJP in 2019, the lowest share among all of India’s major religious groups. Once again, the voting patterns of Christians in India mirror the political preferences of Southern Indians more

generally. In the 2019 parliamentary elections, the BJP received its lowest vote share in the South, including among Hindus; many people in the South, including Christians, voted for regional parties.

Reading the Bible daily and saying the Rosary is a normal part of the Christian Faith in India.



Isaiah 35:4-6 "Here is your God, he comes with vindication; with divine recompense he comes to save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall see, and the ears of the deaf be opened; then the lame shall leap like a stag, and the mute tongue sing for joy."

**The International Catholic Family Newsletter
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Our mission statement is to motivate people to pray and to be Christian examples in their work, home and with others, for those needing the Light in a world of Darkness.

<https://www.catholicfamilynewsletter.com>

**I am watching over you. Pray my children,
Pray, Pray, Pray, My Rosary For The Salvation of
Sinners**

