

Prayer around the world – in pictures

Tibet



A Buddhist child prays in his Tibetan home

Headed by the Dalai Lama, Tibetan Buddhism is practiced by people in Tibet, parts of India, Bhutan, Mongolia and south-west China. It combines the essential teachings of Mahayana Buddhism with Tantric Buddhism and Shamanism and uses texts from an ancient Tibetan religion called Bon. Under the Chinese occupation of Tibet, 99% of monasteries were destroyed and the freedom to practice was curtailed. It is now known as a religion in exile, since most people who practice Tibetan Buddhism do not live in Tibet.

Photograph: Yin Kuang/Greenpeace

India

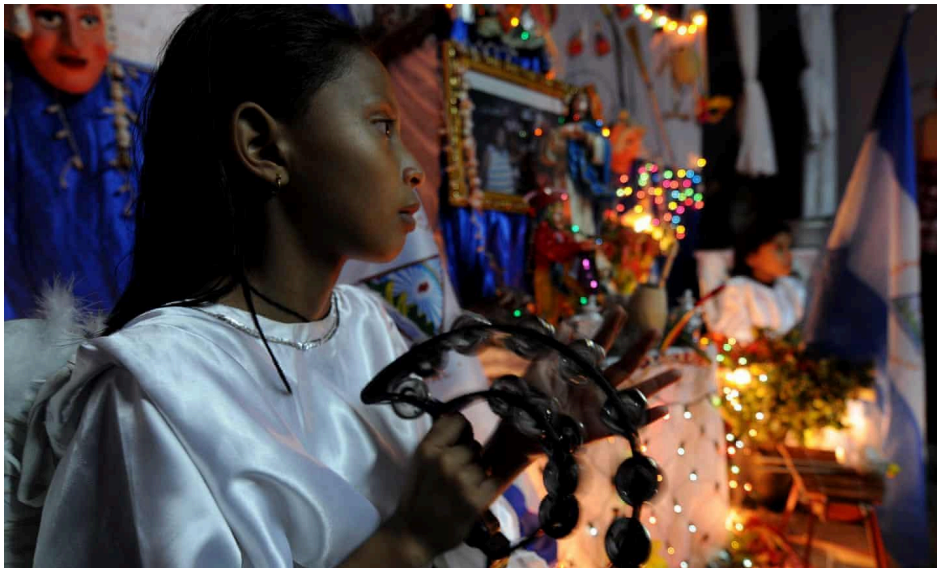


A local Indian woman is blessed at a prayer ritual at Chhath Puja, a Hindu festival, in Dharnia Village.

Chhath Puja is a prominent Hindu festival observed annually in India, most notably in the northern states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, and in regions across Nepal. The festival starts on the sixth day of the Hindu month of Kartika, and lasts for four days to honour the Sun god, Surya, and seek his blessings for a prosperous year. Rituals include offering prayers, fasting and taking dips in the holy water of the Ganges. It is considered one of the most demanding festivals, as those participating , mostly women, must endure long periods without food or water.

Photograph: Ravi Sahani/Greenpeace

Nicaragua



A Catholic child dressed as an angel participates in La Griteria in Nicaragua

A Catholic child dressed as an angel participates in La Griteria at the altar of the Virgin Mary during the celebration of La Purisima, an old tradition of the Christmas holidays in Nicaragua. More than 90% of Nicaragua's population is Christian, 73% of whom are Roman Catholics.

Photograph: Elmer Martinez/AFP

United States



Jume, a refugee from Myanmar living in the United States, prays during the holy period of Ramadan.

Ramadan, the ninth month in the Islamic calendar, is observed by Muslims worldwide. During the month they are required to fast during daylight hours, to commemorate the first revelation of the Qur'an to Muhammad. Ramadan is also seen as a time for hope and remembrance for many who are living in difficult situations. Jume, who fled persecution in

Myanmar for the US, says: 'I pray for all people; people who have died, the living, people who are troubled, crying or fighting.' Despite the hardships Jume has endured, she says Ramadan brings her hope.

Photograph: D. Awad/UNHCR

Uganda



Women and children singing in Kashojwa village in Uganda

In a big single-room house in Kashojwa village, Uganda, women and children sing and pray to help lift the spirits of Burundian refugees in the community. This brings some solace to victims of trauma, says Marie Nkurunziza. More than 340,000 people have been displaced by unrest in Burundi since late 2014. Instead of using camps, the Ugandan government offers refugees small parcels of land in refugee hosting districts. This allows refugees to work, open their own businesses and move freely in communities.

Photograph: Frederic Noy/UNHCR

Papua New Guinea



Tavolo villagers perform customary welcome prayer in Papua New Guinea

The 'sing sing' prayer is a tradition performed by Tavolo villagers on the island of New Britain, Papua New Guinea, to welcome visitors. The Tavolo people believe that traditional song and dance ward off bad intentions and ensure outsiders come in peace. To the Tavolo people the surrounding forests, which have recently come under threat by foreign multinational corporations, play a crucial role in everyday life. The forests provide food, medicine, craft and building materials for the community.

Photograph: John Novis/Greenpeace

Iraq

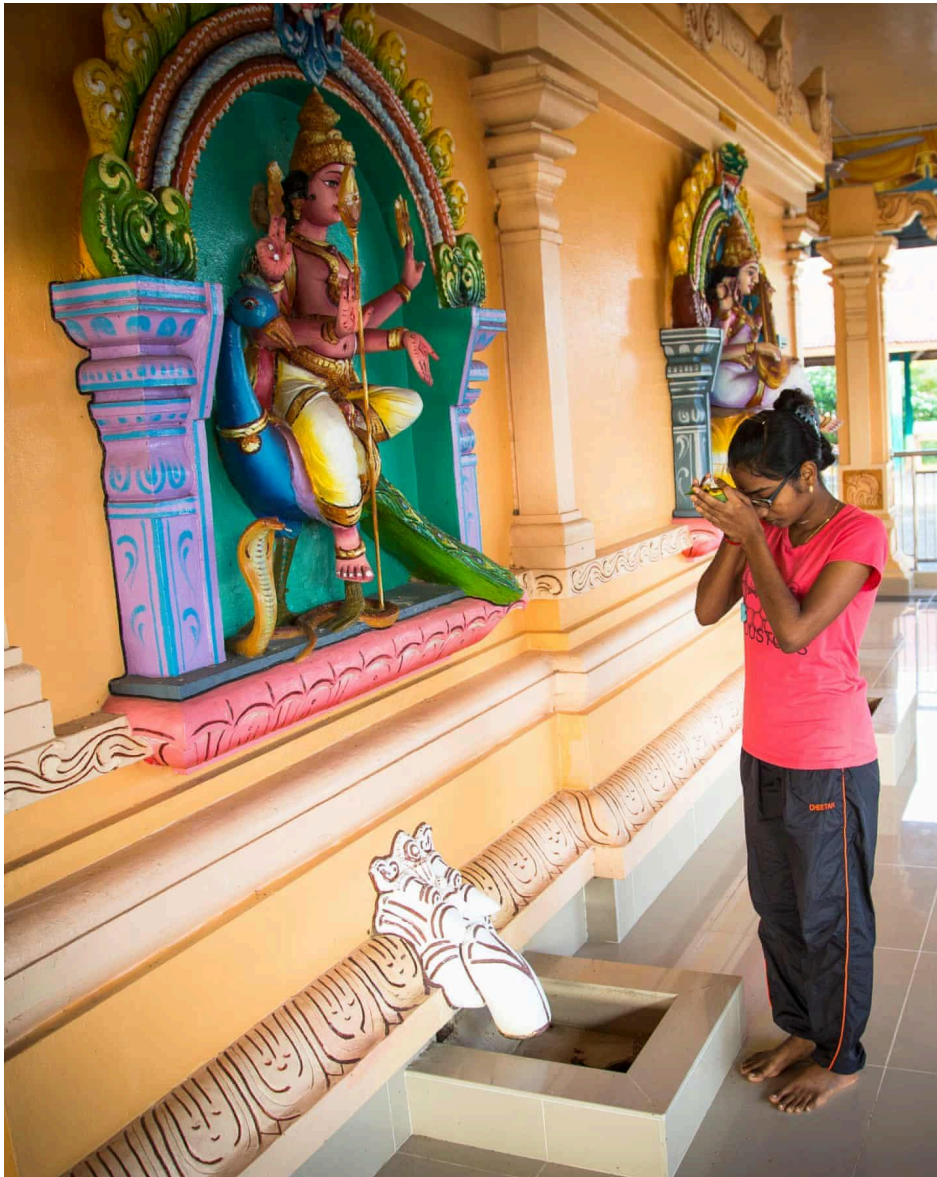


Christian Iraqi residents take part in Easter mass in the northern Iraqi city of Erbil

Hundreds of Iraqi Christians displaced by Isis have fled to Kurdish-controlled regions. Refuge in cities such as Erbil has granted the Christians freedom to practice their religion openly.

Photograph: Dominic Nahr/UNHCR

Malaysia



A Malaysian youth praying at a Hindu temple near her home.

Hinduism is one of the largest religions in the world, with more than a billion adherents worldwide. In Malaysia, however, the constitution recognises only Islam as the true religion of the Malay people, although it is estimated that close to 1.78 million Malaysians are Hindus.

Photograph: Roger Arnold/UNHCR

Bangladesh



A Rohingya refugee prays in Bangladesh

Mohammad Yahia is one of many Rohingya refugees living in Bangladesh. As many as 35,000 registered Rohingya refugees have found shelter in two main camps in the south-eastern region of Cox's Bazar. The Rohingya, one of the most persecuted minorities in the world according to the UN, have fled Burma because of discrimination by the Buddhist majority. Countries such as Bangladesh have allowed the Rohingya to practice their faith – a sect of Sunni Islam with elements of Sufism – without discrimination.

Photograph: Saiful Huq Omi/UNHCR

Uganda



A young Ugandan Jew prays at the new Stern Synagogue in Mbale

A young Ugandan Jew prays at the new Stern Synagogue in Mbale. The synagogue, built largely with money donated by Americans, is a source of pride for Ugandan Jews, known locally as the Abayudaya. The small population of around 2,000 Ugandan Jews have tenaciously maintained their beliefs, despite the prejudice they suffer in a Christian-dominated country.

Photograph: Stephen Wandera/AP

India



Indian Sikh devotees light candles around the view of 'Ek Om Kar' in Amritsar

Sikh devotees gather at the Golden Temple, Harmandir Sahib, for a ceremony to mark the anniversary of the birth of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism. Sikhism is the fourth largest religion in India and has almost 25 million followers worldwide. Most Sikhs in India live in the northern state of Punjab but there are followers throughout the country.

Photograph: Narinder Nanu/AFP/Getty Images

Thailand



A monk prays in a Buddhist temple in Ayutthaya, Thailand

Ayutthaya, a city 40 miles north of Bangkok, is well known for its Buddhist temples and museums. In Thailand, it is estimated there are close to 200,000 monks and 85,000 trainees or novices. Although most live peaceful lives, there have been incidents of violence against them in the southern regions.

Photograph: Jonas Gratzner/Greenpeace

Palestine



Orthodox Christmas eve in Bethlehem

Christians partake in a candlelight procession of prayer at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. The church, now a world heritage site, was commissioned by Constantine the Great to mark the birthplace of Jesus. An estimated 50,000 Christians live in the Palestinian territories, mostly on the West Bank.

Photograph: Abed Al Hashlamoun/EPA

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