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## **Make Your Easter Chocolate Slavery-free**

*“Every person ought to have the awareness that purchasing is always a moral – and not simply an economic – act.” Pope Francis 2015*

Please buy and sell only slavery-free chocolate this Easter. That’s the message from ACRATH (Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans) to everyone intending to buy chocolate, or run chocolate fundraising during Lent.

Australians will spend about \$2 billion on chocolate at Easter and much of it will be chocolate produced using child labour from West Africa. These children pick cocoa beans – a key ingredient used to make chocolate. Many of these children are forced to do this work. Many do not know what the cocoa beans are used for and most have not even tasted chocolate.

Slavery-free chocolate carries one of these three labels - FAIRTRADE, Rainforest Alliance or UTZ certified. This shows that the cocoa beans used in the chocolate’s production have been sourced ethically, from farmers who engage in good labour practices.



ACRATH’s call is in line with Caritas Australia, which funds projects such as cocoa production in Bougainville. In this project young people in Bougainville are learning cocoa production skills. This ensures they get a fair price for their crops at the market and helps break the poverty cycle.

The purchasing of slavery-free chocolate is an important choice that consumers, all of us, can make every day. We can choose to buy only chocolates that are produced slavery-free.

Slavery-free supply chains are becoming a major issue within the Catholic Church and in the wider business community, not just at Easter. Two of Australia’s largest Archdiocese, Sydney and Melbourne, are moving to ensure their supply chains are slavery-free. Sydney has already established a Taskforce, which will look at where possible, only purchasing slavery-proofed products and services. Melbourne is set to follow this lead.

Christine Carolan, the Executive Officer of ACRATH (Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans), said buying slavery-free chocolate at Easter gives people the opportunity to take a stand against human trafficking and slavery.

“We know that some children, working in some of the cocoa farms in West Africa are trafficked. Many others work in dangerous conditions for little or no wages and cannot attend school,” Ms Carolan said.

“Lent is a very important time for schools who raise funds for Caritas’ Project Compassion. We support this wonderful project and ask schools and parishes to remember to use only slavery-free chocolate in their fund-raising. If you buy chocolate with one of the three slavery-free labels you can be sure that the cocoa beans used in the chocolate’s production have been sourced ethically, from farmers who engage in good labour practices.”

Tulane University’s 2013/2014 **Survey Research on Child Labour in West African Cocoa Growing Areas** found that 2.12 million children were working in child labour in cocoa production and 2.03 million children were working in hazardous work in cocoa production in Cote d’Ivoire and Ghana combined.

A decade ago there was almost no slavery-free chocolate sold in Australia. The global movement, led by many groups in Australia, including ACRATH, has seen a dramatic increase in the availability of slavery-free chocolate for consumers.

ACRATH urges consumers this Easter to:

- Buy only slavery-free chocolate – use your buying power to take a stand.
- Use only slavery-free chocolate in school fundraising.
- Eat only slavery-free chocolate. If your local/favourite shop doesn’t sell slavery-free chocolate then ask them to please start stocking it.
- Find out about cocoa bean production and the plight of many children in chocolate production.
- Thank the managers of stores that are stocking slavery-free chocolate this Easter.
- Discuss your slavery-free chocolate decision with five other people to help spread the word.

### **What to Look for**

Slavery-free chocolate carries one of these three labels - FAIRTRADE, Rainforest Alliance or UTZ certified.



To find out more about the campaign and slavery-free chocolate please go to <https://acrath.org.au/take-action/slavery-free-easter-chocolate/>

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