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People are NOT for sale

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Catholic agencies and schools unite to end slavery – starting with Lent

Hundreds of Catholic schools across Australia are being asked to start Lent tomorrow, March 6 2019, with a commitment to buy and eat only slavery-free chocolate at Easter. The Lenten campaign is part of a groundswell across Catholic agencies and schools to slavery-proof their supply chains.

Pope Francis said last month that, faced with the tragic reality of modern slavery, “no one can wash their hands of it, without being in some way, an accomplice to this crime against humanity”. He urged people to work together, through grass roots action and corporate governance, to end slavery around the world.

Catholic agencies and institutions are leading the way in Australia in working towards slavery-free supply chains, including chocolate, especially at Easter.

People can buy slavery-free chocolate in big supermarkets and smaller shops. The easiest way to tell if your chocolate is slavery-free is to check if it has one of these commonly used certification symbols on the wrapping.



Australians spent about \$210 million on Easter chocolate last year. A lot of this chocolate is made using cocoa beans produced in West Africa using children, who are working for little or no wages.

The International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF) estimates that there are 1.5 million children working in the cocoa sector in West Africa. It is estimated that up to 40 million people are trapped in slavery globally – 1 in 4 of these are children. They will never get an education and they will never taste the chocolate produced from the cocoa beans they pick. But people around the world are making decisions that could change this tragedy.

In the past year some major achievements have been made in Australia to address human trafficking:

- The passing in Federal Parliament of the Modern Slavery Act, which will ask big companies to report on their efforts to introduce slavery-free goods and

services. ACRATH was part of a large network that worked for a decade to see this legislation introduced.

- Catholic Education Melbourne is working towards the 333 Catholic primary and secondary schools in Melbourne becoming slavery free.
- The Sydney Archdiocese is reviewing and revising all relevant contractual and business practices as part of its commitment to eradicating human trafficking. They are joining a powerful movement that will change, forever, the lives of enslaved children.
- The Sydney and Victoria/Tasmanian Archdiocesan anti-slavery taskforces are asking schools and parish communities to eat only slavery-free chocolate.
- The Catholic Archdiocese Melbourne is also converting to slavery-free tea and coffee.
- St Vincent's Health Australia is working towards slavery-free procurement of the goods and services used across their 32 sites.

ACRATH's President Sr Noelene Simmons sm said choosing slavery free chocolate was a simple gesture that had the potential to change lives.

There are now many slavery free certification labels on chocolate, as well as the three better-known symbols. Information about the others can be found at:
<https://acrath.org.au/take-action/slavery-free-easter/>

ACRATH's Executive Officer Christine Carolan said, "Let's make this a slavery-free Easter across Australia. Let's buy, eat and talk about slavery-free Easter chocolate and stop the exploitation of children on cocoa farms in West Africa."

For information and resources go to:
<https://acrath.org.au/take-action/slavery-free-easter/>

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