

## HOT-CROSS FURORE

Bigotry and intolerance are traits of extremism which unfortunately rears its ugly head now and again. Some individuals are up in arms over the Halaal symbol on **“their”** buns, claiming this to be a sacrilege and blasphemy against Christianity. In a few social media posts they allege that the buns have been prayed on and accuse the retailer concerned of being insensitive especially during the Easter period.

Although SANHA does not certify the hot cross buns that created the furore, in the absence of any comment from the certification body concerned, we feel constrained to respond on the principle of the matter.

SANHA rejects this furore as unwarranted, having no basis or foundation, which only serves to oxygenate the dying embers of extremism and religious intolerance from the era of the past which our leaders liberated us from with great sacrifices.

The claim that the hot-cross buns are **“an association to the death of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour”** is factually incorrect. Even mainstream Christian leaders from the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference have confirmed that **“hot-cross buns”** is not a tenet of Christianity.

A Halaal mark signifies that the product was produced in a Halaal compliant facility which is free from Pork, alcohol and non-Halaal materials using only permitted ingredients. It is misleading and ludicrous to allege that prayers are read over every hot cross bun.

We concur with Father Chris Townsend's (spokesman for the S.A. Catholic Bishops' Conference) sentiments when he says, **“we live in a multicultural society and need more understanding and religious tolerance. There are a lot more weighty issues to deal with in SA than a few hot-cross Christians.”**

The late Pope John Paul II in one of his Vatican documents stated:

*Upon the Muslims, too, the Church looks with esteem. They adore one God, Living and Enduring, Merciful and All Powerful. Maker of heaven and earth and Speaker to men. They strive to submit wholeheartedly even to His inscrutable decrees just as did Abraham, with whom the Islamic faith is pleased to associate itself. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a Prophet. They also honour Mary, his virgin mother. In addition they await the day of judgement when God will give each man his due after*

*raising him up. Consequently, they prize the moral life, and give worship to God, especially through prayer, alms-giving, and fasting.*

*Although in the course of centuries many quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Muslims, this most sacred synod urges all to forget the past and to strive sincerely for mutual understanding. On behalf of all mankind, let them make common cause of safeguarding and fostering social justice, moral values, peace and freedom.*

We urge right minded people everywhere, irrespective of their faiths to focus on the positive teachings and good works of our religious leaders, to create an environment of mutual respect, understanding and tolerance of each other's religious values.

**It's a BUN deal.**