



MEDIA RELEASE – ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF PETERBOROUGH

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Peterborough, ON – Sacred Heart College’s plan to be fully operating as a liberal arts university in the Catholic tradition in Peterborough may now be in jeopardy after the Diocese of Peterborough has learned that a local development company outbid the Roman Catholic Diocese of Peterborough on the purchase of the current Monseigneur-Jamot school property on Romaine Street.

Sacred Heart College received in December 2016 the recommendation from the Minister for provincial approval to become a fully accredited university degree granting institution and had been moving ahead with its plan to purchase the École élémentaire catholique Monseigneur-Jamot, which was to be offered for sale by Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud. The Monseigneur-Jamot school property offered an opportunity to expand the College’s current academic offerings and create a Sacred Heart College campus immediately adjacent to Sacred Heart Church and the Sacred Heart rectory.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Peterborough has spent the last 11 years working on this initiative after His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI encouraged His Excellency Nicola De Angelis, Bishop of the Diocese of Peterborough, in September 2006 to establish a fully functioning liberal arts university in the Catholic tradition in Peterborough. Bishop De Angelis met with senior leaders from the local school boards including the previous Director of Education and Board Chair for the Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud to collaborate and support each other’s acquisition of school properties in the local community for educational purposes.

The French Catholic board felt compelled under revised provincial guidelines on the disposition of school properties to publicly list the property for sale. The offer

from the Diocese of Peterborough was comparable to the offer by Paul Dietrich of Parkview Homes, however, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Peterborough's offer included cash and a Catholic community in-kind partnership component with the Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud Board.

Apostolic Administrator, His Excellency Bishop McGrattan, comments. "This is a tremendous disappointment for Peterborough, our potential relationship with educational institutions, the university in the city and the Catholic community. We are astounded by this detrimental outcome for Sacred Heart College. The implications for the entire Catholic community both here in the diocese, the province of Ontario and beyond have yet to be fully understood."

Interim Principal, Fr. Joseph Devereaux echoes this sentiment saying, "I have been involved with the foundation of Sacred Heart College since it began some eleven years ago following Bishop DeAngelis' conversation with His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI in Rome. It has always been understood that the Diocese of Peterborough would purchase the Msgr. Jamot School Property when it was available for sale. The property was in the hands of the Church historically and we anticipated its return to the Church through this sale. I am shocked! It is sad that a school, which should remain a school, is going to be made over into apartments. We believe in young people and want to help them to achieve a great education. We are not deterred, but definitely disappointed."

The Sacred Heart College board of directors will need to consider the implications of this situation on its business plan for the post-secondary institution in consultation with the Diocese and the future bishop, His Excellency Most Rev. Daniel Miehm. As well, the possibility always exists for the province to intervene retaining the school property for educational purposes or for the developer to generously recognize the educational mission of Sacred Heart College and the importance of the property in its plans. Following those considerations and deliberations, the Roman Catholic Diocese will update local parish members as well as the broader community on the future of Sacred Heart College given this regrettable and unforeseen setback.

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