



## **MEDIA RELEASE – ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF PETERBOROUGH**

**DATE: June 3, 2024**

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Peterborough has been informed that a Grade 4 teacher at St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School in Douro, Thomas Christopher Cavanagh, has plead guilty to possession of child pornography, transmitting sexually explicit material to a person under 18 years of age, and communicating with a person under 18 years of age to facilitate the making or sharing of child pornography.

The Faith Animator of the Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board, Fr. Paul Massel, provided pastoral support to Mr. Cavanagh and his family. Further to that, Fr. Massel provided a “note with reference” for the court to consider in determining Mr. Cavanagh’s sentence.

It is customary for clergy to provide pastoral support and guidance to people facing a range of life circumstances. However, pastoral ministry is not usually documented and provided for the use of the courts. Fr. Massel did not consult with or seek the approval of the bishop for this letter. The crimes to which Mr. Cavanagh has plead guilty are serious and disturbing, and the Diocese does not condone his criminal actions or the impact they have had upon the victims.

We pray for all who have been impacted by this difficult situation.