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## Ex-Seminarian Details Account of Contact with Monsignor

By Daniel J. Wakin  
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A 37-year-old former seminarian yesterday detailed the allegations he had made that led to the suspension of an influential monsignor in the New York Archdiocese -- describing an intense spiritual tie that he said grew sexually charged and emotionally abusive.

In an interview, the man, Daniel Donohue, outlined a six-year relationship with Msgr. Charles M. Kavanagh that began when Mr. Donohue was a 14-year-old freshman at Cathedral Preparatory Seminary in 1978 and continued to the end of his second year at Cathedral College in Douglaston, N.Y., an undergraduate seminary. He said he dropped out of the seminary then, at 19, emotionally shattered by the experience.

On Friday, the archdiocese said Monsignor Kavanagh was ordered to step down as its vicar for development, or chief fund-raiser, and as pastor of the large parish of St. Raymond's in the Bronx. It said it acted because of a report that Monsignor Kavanagh, while rector of Cathedral Prep, had an "improper relationship" with a minor.

Monsignor Kavanagh, who remains in seclusion, has not responded to interview requests relayed in telephone messages and through friends. Last night, however, a close friend of the monsignor, who said he was speaking on his behalf, said, "He adamantly denies any improper relationship with this individual."

The monsignor's supporters have rallied around him, saying such a charge is inconceivable. "The man has done nothing but, in a million small ways, good deeds for people," said John Dearie, a former state assemblyman whose district included St. Raymond's and who grew up in the parish. "He's a remarkable human being."

Msgr. Thomas B. Derivan, pastor of neighboring St. Helena's parish, spoke about Monsignor Kavanagh at Masses on Sunday, declaring him innocent and saying the allegation of an improper relationship was "utterly foolish and hurtful."

William F. Balduino, who said he served as an altar boy for Monsignor Kavanagh at Sacred Heart parish in the 1960's, sought out a reporter to say that he had spent innumerable hours with the priest, both alone and in a group, without a hint of trouble, and that the monsignor had ministered to his family for years even after they moved to New Jersey. "If you needed 5 minutes, he'd give you 10, and drive two hours to do it," Mr. Balduino said.

Mr. Donohue, speaking on the condition that his place of residence be identified only as in the Northwest and his occupation as the proprietor of a business that develops Web sites, painted a different picture.

"This hurts, this hurts really, really bad," he said, his voice choked with tears. "I lost my vocation. I lost my education. I've had to walk with this for a long, long time." Mr. Donohue, who is married with four children, said the experience had left him with sleep problems and deep anxiety, and had contributed to an estrangement from his family.

"For the people who say he's a good priest, I have no argument," he said of Monsignor Kavanagh. "But I tell them they lost another good priest, and I don't know if I can stand there and say they even

have one good priest."

Mr. Donohue said he had pushed aside the memory of his relationship with the priest, even declining in 1988 to report the case when, he said, priests who knew about it approached his parents and suggested a report to the archdiocese. The archdiocese has said it first heard of the allegations two weeks ago, and Joseph Zwilling, its spokesman, said yesterday that he had no indications that any priests had complained on their own.

Mr. Donohue, who was living in Westchester County at the time, said he was in the eighth grade when he felt a religious calling, and was recruited to Cathedral Prep by Monsignor Kavanagh. "I loved the seminary," he said, "and I loved the idea of becoming a priest, and it was my dream."

Monsignor Kavanagh became his spiritual director, confessor and best friend, a complex situation with disastrous results, he said. "There were too many lines being crossed."

Toward the end of his sophomore year, Mr. Donohue said, the normal physicality between a mentor and a student became twisted. Hugs went on longer than they should have, he said.

During prayer, the priest would hold his hand in his own lap or in Mr. Donohue's. "I feel sick to my stomach right now," he said in describing the activity. Meanwhile, the priest often invited him to professional sporting events.

At the time, Mr. Donohue was living at the Bishop Ford Residence of the school, which was then on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, where the monsignor also had quarters. At one point during his sophomore or junior year, as Mr. Donohue lay on a couch in Monsignor Kavanagh's quarters, where he often studied, he said the priest "lay his body on top of me full force, just right on top of me, rubbing his body and rubbing his face on me."

He said there was no genital contact. "It's not as graphic as you think, but it's very, very far from innocent," he said.

During his senior year, he said, Father Kavanagh took him to Washington for an anti-abortion rally. They shared a hotel room. In the middle of the night, the priest, wearing nothing but his underwear, climbed into bed with him and committed a similar act, Mr. Donohue said. He said he did not respond.

By the end of that year, Mr. Donohue said, he told the priest that the physical contact had to end. The priest responded, Mr. Donohue said, by saying he had misinterpreted the situation.

During his sophomore year, Mr. Donohue said, he would stay at the Ford residence on Friday nights when he taught a confirmation class at a Hell's Kitchen church.

On those nights, he said, Monsignor Kavanagh would watch him in his bedroom through a bathroom keyhole. Mr. Donohue would stamp his foot to scare him off.

Mr. Donohue said that in April 1984 he confronted the priest with a five-page letter, describing his anger. "I told him he came between me and everything I valued, me and my faith, me and my friends. He came between me and my very self," he said.

In the summer after his sophomore year in college, Mr. Donohue said, he dropped out and told his father in broad terms about the relationship. In the fall of 1985, however, he decided he needed to seek out Monsignor Kavanagh to express forgiveness.

"He kept saying, 'I'm a good priest,' and dissolved into a state of emotional collapse." He said he then embraced the priest and rocked him back and forth. "He went from this emotional disgusting blob in my arms to sitting up and picking up his cigar and saying, 'O.K., let me tell you how this really is,' and I told him, 'No. You're never going to tell me how it is ever again.' "

Years later, as Mr. Donohue began reading about the priest sex abuse scandal, he said, he began wondering what had happened to Monsignor Kavanagh. He said he contacted the Manhattan district

attorney, and wrote to Cardinal Edward M. Egan. He said that the cardinal had not responded, but that he received a call from a lawyer for the archdiocese, who listened to his account.

He is retaining his own lawyer and is considering a lawsuit.

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