

City Council votes in 'domestic partnerships'

By Lee Strong
Senior staff writer

ROCHESTER — Despite attempts by diocesan officials to delay a vote, Rochester's City Council approved two pieces of controversial "domestic partnership" legislation April 12.

By a 5-4 vote, the City Council approved the creation of a partner registry through which unmarried and homosexual couples living together can legally register as "domestic partners" — if they meet certain conditions and pay a small fee. By a 7-2 vote, the council approved extending health and other benefits to the partners of city employees.

The bills were introduced by council members Tim Mains and Brian Curran, both Democrats. Both bills were vocally supported by the local homosexual community.

Mayor William A. Johnson Jr. signed both bills April 14. The legislation will go into effect approximately July 1.

Earlier in the day the council vote was taken, Jack Balinsky, director of Catholic

Charities of the Diocese of Rochester, Inc., sent a letter on behalf of the diocese to all City Council members asking them to delay the vote.

Balinsky also personally telephoned City Council President Lois Geiss from Albany to ask for a delay. Geiss voted in favor of both pieces of legislation.

In his letter seeking to delay the vote on the legislation, Balinsky explained that opposition to the legislation was not intended to promote "discrimination against any group."

Nevertheless, Balinsky wrote, "I am concerned that implications for our societal understanding of the nature of family have not been addressed adequately. The Catholic Church has consistently taught that family structure and values are, and should be, the foundation of our society."

In an interview after the legislation was approved, Balinsky voiced his surprise at the speed with which the council approved the measures.

Following months of discussion about such legislation, Mains and Curran pro-

posed the two bills on Holy Thursday, March 31. The council's Finance and Law Committee, which Mains chairs and of which Curran is a member, voted 3-0 April 7 to send the bill to the full council for the April 12 vote.

Balinsky noted that diocesan officials had first expected the bills to be discussed for some time before a vote was taken. Following the April 7 committee vote, the council revealed that the bills would come to before the full council April 12. The diocesan Issues Coordination Team decided to send the letter requesting a delay after its April 11 meeting.

"We felt it needed more thoughtful discussion," Balinsky said. "What we have here is a unit of government creating a new legally recognized mode of persons being in relationship with one another."

Such a definition could have an effect on "our larger notion of what families are," Balinsky said.

Gary Muldoon, one of two City Council members who voted against both

measures, acknowledged that the bills came to a vote very quickly.

"I don't think that we had sufficient opportunity to discuss the issue," Muldoon said. "If Rochester is to be among the 20 or so communities in the country that are on record as having 'domestic partnership,' the people of Rochester need to understand what is being done."

He added, "It seems to me that issues of this magnitude need to be considered by the community at large."

Councilman Robert Stevenson, who also voted against both bills, objected to the extension of benefits to domestic partners on economic grounds — in light of the fact that the city is going to lay off people because of budget problems. Mains has reportedly estimated that extending benefits to the partners of city employees would cost approximately \$100,000.

Stevenson said he objected to the registry bill on the grounds that it is too "inclusive."

"That (bill) is going to damage the stability of the institution of marriage," noted Stevenson, who attends Sacred Heart Cathedral, 296 Flower City Park. "It's undermining the marriage contract. What you're setting up is a minimum contract you can dissolve."

Geiss, who proved to be the swing vote in approving the registry bill, did not return repeated phone calls by the *Catholic Courier*.

Domestic partnership bills have been considered in a number of cities across the United States. Church officials have always opposed such legislation.

In New York state, bills creating registries for domestic partner have been approved in New York City and Ithaca.

Ithaca's City Council passed the registry legislation in 1990, but following months of discussion, chose not to pass a bill extending benefits to domestic partners of city employees. According to Connie Holcomb, chief stenographer for the City Clerk's office, only about 16 couples — almost all of them homosexual — have registered since the legislation passed.

Balinsky said now that domestic partnership legislation has passed in Rochester, the Issues Coordination Team will have to consider what — if any — further action the diocese might take.

Liturgical musician takes on 'Phantom'

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

TRUMANSBURG — You may recognize some of Ray Repp's songs, such as "Here We Are" and "Allelu," from Sunday folk Masses.

And, according to Repp, you may also recognize a composition of his in the smash production "The Phantom of the Opera."

The only difference — and to Repp it's a big one — is that "Phantom" composer Andrew Lloyd Webber, not Repp, is credited for writing a piece of music which shows up repeatedly in "Phantom."

In the summer of 1990, a few months after noticing the extreme similarity between Webber's music and his 1978 song "Till You," Repp filed a copyright-infringement lawsuit against Webber.

To Repp's displeasure, it's a case which still has yet to be settled. Lloyd Webber's attorneys recently entered a motion for summary judgement in hopes of having the suit dismissed, but New York City-based Federal Court Judge Shirley Kram has not yet determined whether the case will go to trial.

According to Tracey Diamond, a law clerk for Judge Kram, no deadline has been set for the judge's decision.

When this lawsuit is settled, Repp predicts that "it will be on the front page of every paper in the world."

Repp's assertion is backed up by the fact that he's an international celebrity in his own right.

Now 51, Repp has composed songs for the past 30 years which have literally revolutionized Christian musical litur-



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer
Liturgical musician Ray Repp talks with *Catholic Courier* staff writer Mike Latona during an April 13 interview. Repp has filed a lawsuit alleging copyright-infringement against Andrew Lloyd Webber.

gies, beginning with his "Mass for Young Americans" — a folk Mass with acoustic guitar and vocals — in 1964.

Controversy has also been a close companion of Repp's over the past three decades. Much of his music was banned in U.S. Catholic churches until U.S. bishops approved guitar music during Mass in the late 1960s.

In 1969, he dropped out of the seminary after 12 years. An avid supporter of draft dodgers, Repp acknowledged that he became disillusioned when the Catholic Church was not more outspo-

ken against the Vietnam War at the time. He also opposed *Humanae Vitae* ("of human life"), Pope Paul VI's encyclical on married love and procreation which reaffirmed church teaching that artificial contraception is morally wrong.

As a liturgical musician, Repp has been tremendously successful. He has sold more than one million copies of "Mass for Young Americans," recorded 11 albums to date and has had his music translated into 20 languages.

He also lectures and performs world
Continued on page 5

Pastor of Horseheads parish resigns suddenly

HORSEHEADS — Father Joseph M. Jankowiak has resigned as pastor of St. Mary Our Mother Church, 816 W. Broad St.

In a letter dated April 8, the 55-year-old priest stated to parishioners that "throughout this year, I have felt that it was time for me to move. After ten happy and loving years, I no longer could muster the energy and vision St. Mary Our Mother's Parish deserves."

The letter, inserted in parish bulletins the weekend of April 9-10, also said:

"On Holy Thursday, my tears during the homily surfaced deep personal issues I have been dealing with privately for some time. After a very supportive

meeting with Bishop (Matthew H.) Clark, it was decided that I need not wait till June, 1994 to get the professional help I need. Rather, to take care of myself, I am resigning the pastorate of St. Mary Our Mother parish, effective immediately."

Deacon Dan Hurley, who also serves as principal of St. Mary Our Mother School, noted that Father Jankowiak's resignation came as a surprise.

"We're all kind of shell-shocked at this point," said Hurley.

According to the diocesan Office of Constituent Relations, Father Jankowiak's request for an immediate leave of absence was granted by Bishop Clark

and he has left the parish.

According to diocesan spokesperson Pam Kingsley, Father Scott M. Kubinski, parochial vicar at St. Mary Our Mother, has been appointed temporary pastoral administrator and will remain in that capacity through the end of June, 1994. The diocese was scheduled to begin a search this week for a permanent pastor beyond June.

Father Jankowiak had served as pastor of St. Mary Our Mother since 1984. In the six years prior to that time, he served as pastor of his home parish, St. Stanislaus Church in Rochester.

—Mike Latona

Diocesan Appointments

All appointments are effective June 28, 1994, unless otherwise indicated.

Retirements

Father Michael C. Hogan, from pastor of St. Mary Our Lady of the Hills Church in Honeoye, to retirement at St. John of Rochester rectory in Fairport.

Father Dominic F. Mockevicius, from pastor of St. Vincent dePaul Church in Churchville, to retirement at a private residence in Webster.

Appointments

Father Richard J. Beligotti, from pastor of St. Charles Borromeo Church in Elmira Heights, to pastor of St. Thomas Church in Leicester and St. Lucy Church in Retsof.

Father William G. Darling, from pastor of St. Patrick's Church in Owego, to pastor of St. Salome's Church in Rochester.

Father Peter A. Deckman, from
Continued on page 5