

His Ministry Is Magic!



Father Weber

Nick Weber does a magical escape from manacles close to the grand finale of his performance to demonstrate that "the Resurrection is the greatest escape act of history."

Weber is ring master and chief performer in the Royal Lichtenstein Circus, variously billed as a quarter-ring circus, or the World's Smallest Circus.

Nick Weber is also Father Nick Weber, a Jesuit.

He and his troupe of two other performers (Larry Ryan and Stephen Coyle), a shetland pony, two cats, a monkey, and

what must be the world's tiniest full grown dog, are touring the country for their eighth season. They performed at the University of Rochester last week under the eegis of the Newman Community there.

Father Weber has put together a sparkling show packed with humor, magic, high-wire daring, liberally laced with parable and a singularly refreshing wonder at the marvels of God.

The circus is his ministry.

He said that even when he was a small child, the circus was "my first dream and passion."

On entry into the Society of Jesus in 1957, Father Weber took a degree in theater and founded a small theater group in California, his home state.

But that paled quickly, he said, when he realized that the group had "become too precious. I wanted a framework that would be available to passersby." And, too, "I wasn't honest to my heart."

A year after Father Weber was ordained, in 1971, the Royal Lichtenstein was born.

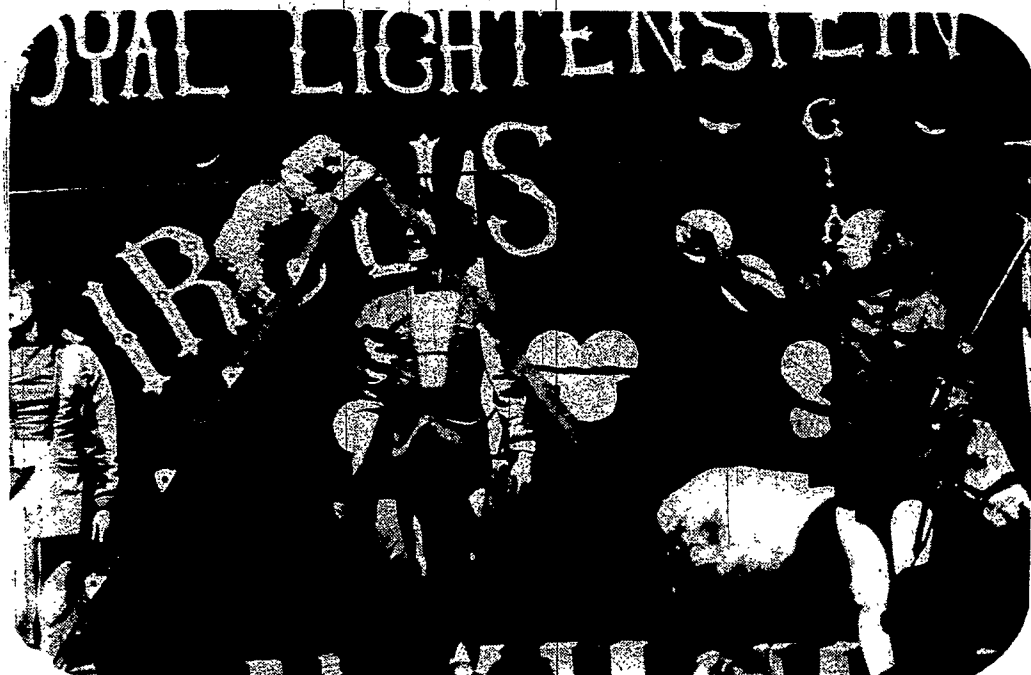
He knows of no other



Father Weber often chats with the youngest members of his audience.

Text by John Dash

Photos by Terrance J. Brennan



What must be the world's tiniest full-grown dog mounts a ladder as the rest of the troupe cheers him on. Left to right, Ryan, Coyle and Father Weber.

religious male whose entire ministry is circus. There are, however, three Little Sisters of Jesus who work the concessions and as seamstresses for the Circus Vargas, he said.

Delighting and enlightening audiences as a ministry has sometimes raised eyebrows among his clerical peers, Father

Weber cheerfully admits. He fears that some of his colleagues are of the notion that "God can only happen where we have our money locked up."

Be that as it may, for Father Weber and his audience of 300 last week the circus proved to be "good to the soul."

The Open Window

By Father Louis J. Hohman

Are We Jewish Christians?
Dear Father Hohman:

If possible could you please explain why we are known as Christians and not Jewish Christians? I mean no disrespect but it has always puzzled me why we have not acknowledged our connection with Judaism. Our Lord and Savior Jesus was born a Jew, lived His life as a Jew and died as a Jew. I must honestly admit I have felt that as Christians the Church has failed to place importance on our Jewish heritage and has emphasized our differences rather than our similarities. It troubles me that since God has made it obvious that the Jewish faith is His faith then we as Christians should be fully aware of His chosen faith.

I thank you for any help you may be able to provide.
(Signed) P.P.

P.S. I realize that many traditions and teachings of Christianity are taken from Judaism but I don't believe that most Christians are

aware of this nor do most Christians know anything about this faith. I can't help but feel that this is wrong and that as Christians without this knowledge we are missing a great deal.

Dear P.P.,
I agree heartily with everything you said in your letter. If you are over 30 you are painfully aware of how much effort was made in the past to magnify the differences between our own and any other faith and to diminish the likenesses. Nor can we forget the substantial degree of prejudice which fell upon the people of Jewish origin.

There is, however, one problem with calling ourselves Jewish Christians. The problem is that being a Jew is being of a particular race as well as of a particular religion. We do very often speak of the Judeo Christian tradition. Anyone who is knowledgeable of Catholic theology and is a student of Scriptures realizes that we have our roots in Judaism and as St. Paul said, we are spiritually children of Abraham. If you would like more information about Jewish teaching and tradition the obvious place to go is the Old Testament which is the sacred book of the Jewish faith. That same set of books is also the first

45 books of our Bible known as the Old Testament.

Effort is being made to understand the Jewish tradition more fully. For example, during Lent in many parishes a Seder Service was held to commemorate the original Passover Service of the Jews which also commemorates our freedom won by the redemptive act of Christ. It is something which belongs to both faiths and therefore is celebrated in conjunction fairly frequently.

I sincerely hope that more and more effort will be made to make our Jewish heritage more known to Christians and more loved and respected by them. As I said before Paul makes the claim that we are all spiritual children of Abraham.

Generic Drugs

Generic Drugs will be the topic of a presentation scheduled for Thursday, April 26 at the Al Sigi Center Gymnasium. Dr. Michael Weintraub, an associate professor of Pharmacology, and Burton H. Freedman, president of the Pharmacy Society of Rochester, will speak on "Generic Drug Price-Myths and Reality," and "What You Always Wanted to Know about the New Generic Drug Law and Were Afraid to Ask," respectively. Admission is free and all are invited to attend.

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