

WORSHIP KIT

Overheard

Conversations by the Cross



A SERIES OF SPECIAL SERVICES FOR LENT

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Overheard

Conversations by the Cross

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Overheard

Conversations by the Cross

A SERIES OF SPECIAL SERVICES FOR LENT

About Overheard

Do you suppose it is possible that various people who were involved in our Lord's Passion ever had the opportunity to talk with one another about it? Perhaps even right then, while the events were happening? Can you imagine what they might have said? People like:

- Malchus, whose ear was cut off and healed at Gethsemane, and Mark, who ran from the Garden naked.
- Barabbas, the criminal released when Jesus was condemned, and Caiaphas, the high priest who led the cries for his release.
- Pontius Pilate and Procula, his wife.
- Simon of Cyrene, who carried our Lord's cross, and the Centurion who compelled him to.
- The Two Thieves who were crucified with Christ.
- Mary, our Lord's grieving mother, and John, the "beloved disciple," who took her into his home.

If you could have listened to conversations like those, what might you have OVER-HEARD?

With piercing insight and dramatic reality, these Lenten services invite us to eavesdrop on the concerns and conflicts of people whose lives were touched ... and changed ... by the crucifixion of Jesus Christ—just as our lives have been.

The Dramas In Their Setting

In addition to the PREACHER, each of the dramas in this series involves no more than three participants, the two title characters and a third actor with a small part to add color and variety to the presentation. (The sixth drama, Mary and John, involves only those two participants.)

While it is possible for the six dramas in this series to be performed in the chancel with the actors visible to the congregation, they were written to be heard rather than seen. It is suggested that the actors be hidden from the view of the congregation by being located in the church balcony, at the rear of the church, behind a screen, or in some way kept from view. This will allow worshipers to concentrate on the words rather than on the participants. It also allows the actors to concentrate on the script rather than on memorizing.

It is suggested that the actors mark their parts in the scripts, and that they rehearse reading them together for the most effective presentation.

Since the drama is envisioned to serve the function of the sermon in the worship service, each drama begins and ends with material to be presented in sermonic form, from pulpit or lectern, by a worship leader. The Sermonic Introduction sets the scene for the drama and expresses some pastoral concerns that will be addressed in it. In the Sermonic Conclusion the preacher has an opportunity to comment on the drama and draw appropriate points from it. (It is assumed, of course, that pastors will adapt these homiletical materials to their own styles and concerns.)

Since these are dramatic presentations, the use of such effects as special music, lighting (dimmed during the dramas, for example), and appropriate sound effects is encouraged.

Additional Service Materials

Since various denominations—and individual congregations within them—have their own worship practices and traditions, the materials provided with these dramas do

not offer a “standard” Order of Service which must be used. Rather, they offer a number of components from which worship leaders may pick and choose, to be worked into an Order of Service which best serves the needs and customs of the local parish.

In addition to THE DRAMA, with its SERMONIC INTRODUCTION and SERMONIC CONCLUSION, these items are provided or suggested with each script:

- A **THEME HYMN**, consisting of two stanzas for each week, written especially for this series. It may be sung to the tune of “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded,” organ music for which is provided with these materials. The *first stanza* is the same for each of the six weeks, and prepares for the drama; the *second stanza* relates directly to the specific drama for the day and is best used *after* the drama.
- **SUGGESTED HYMNS**, at least five for each service (more than you will probably need!), drawn from a collection broad enough that at least several should be familiar.
- A **SCRIPTURE READING** from one of the four Gospels, relating the biblical event from which the drama is derived.
- Two **PSALMS**, either of which may be incorporated into the service as a Call to Worship, responsive reading, or Scripture lesson.
- A **PRAYER** appropriate to the service theme.

Any or all of these items may be used as part of your Order of Service. Here are three examples (each of which, incidentally, shows a different way to use the Theme Hymn):

A Suggested Order Of Service

Opening Hymn
Call to Worship (may be the responsive reading of one of the Psalms)
Gloria Patri
Scripture Reading
Theme Hymn (first stanza)
Sermonic Introduction
The Drama

Sermonic Conclusion
Theme Hymn (second stanza)
Offering (during which a Hymn or Choir Anthem may be sung)
Prayers and Lord's Prayer
Benediction
Closing Hymn

Another Order Of Service

Opening Hymn
Call to Worship (may be the responsive reading of one of the Psalms)
Gloria Patri
Scripture Reading
Hymn or Choir Anthem
Sermonic Introduction
Theme Hymn (first stanza)
The Drama
Theme Hymn (second stanza)
Sermonic Conclusion
Offering (during which a Hymn or Choir Anthem may be sung)
Prayers and Lord's Prayer
Benediction
Closing Hymn

Still Another Order Of Service

Opening Hymn
Call to Worship (may be the responsive reading of one of the Psalms)
Gloria Patri
Scripture Reading
Hymn or Choir Anthem
Sermonic Introduction
Theme Hymn (first stanza)
The Drama
Theme Hymn (second stanza)
Sermonic Conclusion
Offering (during which a Hymn or Choir Anthem may be sung)

Prayers and Lord's Prayer
Benediction
Closing Hymn

Good Friday

While these six services are numbered in chronological order, it is possible to reverse numbers 5 and 6, especially if one wishes to use *The Two Thieves* on Good Friday.

Recorded Dramas

Recordings of six dramas is included with these materials, to help the congregation's actors get some "feel" for their parts.

Where possible, congregations might also consider offering the recording—with the local pastor, perhaps, serving as narrator—to radio stations as a special "community service" each week in Lent or during Holy Week.

It is also possible to use the recordings during Lenten services or to provide it for use in a church Bible class or small group.

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Overheard

Conversations by the Cross

A SERIES OF SPECIAL SERVICES FOR LENT

Service One

—Malchus and Mark—

An Order Of Service

Call to Worship

- P** In those days, and in that time, says the Lord, the people of Israel and the people of Judah shall come;
- C** **and they shall seek the Lord their God.**
- P** They shall ask the way to Zion, with faces turned toward it, saying,
- C** **“Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant which will never be forgotten.”**
- P** As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,
- C** **that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.**

Hymn

Psalmody Psalm 142

- P** I call to the Lord for help, I plead with him.
- C** **I bring him all my complaints; I tell him all my troubles. When I am ready to give up, he knows what I should do.**
- P** In the path where I walk, my enemies have hidden a trap for me.
- C** **I look beside me and I see that there is no one to help me; there is no one to protect me; no one cares for me.**
- P** Lord, I cry to you for help;
- C** **You, Lord, are my protector; you are all I want in this life.**
- P** Listen to my cry for help, because I am sunk in despair.
- C** **Save me from my enemies, who are much stronger than I am.**
- P** Rescue me from my trouble;
- C** **then in the meeting of your people I will praise you, because you have been good to me.**

Gloria Patri Gethsemane 77 77 77

Glory to the Father be,
 And to Christ, eternally.
 Glory to the Spirit raise.
 Join all nature in her praise:
 From creation's ancient shore
 Unto life forevermore.

Holy Scripture Mark 14:26-52

Theme Hymn Herzlich Tut Mich 76 76 D

The voices of the Passion,
 Those words from ancient days—
 What message do they fashion
 As on your cross I gaze?

In words that once were spoken,
In speech now overheard,
Grant me, O Lord, this token:
To hear your living Word!

Do you suppose that it is possible that people who were involved in our Lord's Passion ever had the opportunity to talk with one another about it? Perhaps right then, while the events were happening? Can you imagine what they might have said?

You are invited to listen in now on the conflicts and concerns of two people whose lives were touched—and changed—by the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Overheard: Malchus and Mark

Theme HymnHerzlich Tut Mich 76 76 D

Lord, when with fears I'm stricken
To drive me from your sight,
My faith, O Savior, quicken
To know your saving might.
What blessing I inherit
when standing at your side:
Your righteousness and merit
My nakedness to hide!

Offering

Prayers

- P** O Lord, how shall we stand before you in the nakedness of our sin, our guilt, our shame?
- C** **How shall we stand, save robed in the righteousness of your righteous Son, our Savior, Jesus the Messiah?**
- P** And how shall we know his righteousness made ours unless you speak to us, opening our ears and healing our hearing by the power of your sanctifying Spirit,

C that hearing, we may believe; and believing we may follow; and in following we may not be ashamed.

P Work in us, O God, the miracle of healing faith,

C faith in him whose blood was spilled to forgive us even when we fail and flee; faith in the forgiving love that returns us once again to the hard and pleasant paths of righteousness,

P in Christ our Lord, by whom we pray:

C Our Father ...

(If Holy Communion is to be celebrated, it may be celebrated at this time, according to local tradition.)

Benediction

Closing Hymn

Overheard

Conversations by the Cross

A SERIES OF SPECIAL SERVICES FOR LENT

Service One

—Malchus and Mark—

Worship Helps, Hymns, Scripture Readings, Prayers

Although an entire order of service is provided in this kit (see pages 9-11), you will find below some resources to help you construct your own worship service. They will be especially helpful if you plan to embed the Overheard Dramas into your regular Sunday Lenten worship. Grab a piece or two to accompany the Drama. Use the theme hymn as your hymn of the day. Work the prayer into your own Prayers of the People. Utilize one of the Psalms as an opening or closing litany. You know the needs of your worshiping community better than we. We hope these resources are helpful as you prepare to overhear God's good and gracious Gospel.

Suggested Hymns

"Glory Be To Jesus"

"How Great Thou Art"

"God Moves In A Mysterious Way"

"Jesus, Thy Blood And Righteousness"

"I Love To Tell The Story"

Theme HymnHerzlich Tut Mich 76 76 D

The voices of the Passion,
Those words from ancient days—
What message do they fashion
As on your cross I gaze?
In words that once were spoken,
In speech now overheard,
Grant me, O Lord, this token:
To hear your living Word!

Lord, when with fears I'm stricken
To drive me from your sight,
My faith, O Savior, quicken
To know your saving might.
What blessing I inherit
when standing at your side:
Your righteousness and merit
My nakedness to hide!

Scripture Reading Mark 14:26-52

When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. And Jesus said to them, "You will all become deserters; for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." Peter said to him, "Even though all become deserters, I will not." Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times." But he said vehemently, "Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you." And all of them said the same. They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. And he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake." And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want." He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. He came a third time and said to them,

“Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.” Immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.” So when he came, he went up to him at once and said, “Rabbi!” and kissed him. Then they laid hands on him and arrested him. But one of those who stood near drew his sword and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to them, “Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But let the scriptures be fulfilled.” All of them deserted him and fled. A certain young man was following him, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, but he left the linen cloth and ran off naked.

Psalm 142

With my voice I cry to the LORD; with my voice I make supplication to the LORD. I pour out my complaint before him; I tell my trouble before him. When my spirit is faint, you know my way. In the path where I walk they have hidden a trap for me. Look on my right hand and see—there is no one who takes notice of me; no refuge remains to me; no one cares for me. I cry to you, O LORD; I say, “You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.” Give heed to my cry, for I am brought very low. Save me from my persecutors, for they are too strong for me. Bring me out of prison, so that I may give thanks to your name. The righteous will surround me, for you will deal bountifully with me.

Psalm 43

Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause against an ungodly people; from those who are deceitful and unjust deliver me! For you are the God in whom I take refuge; why have you cast me off? Why must I walk about mournfully because of the oppression of the enemy? O send out your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling. Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy; and I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God. Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.

Prayers

- P** O Lord, how shall we stand before you in the nakedness of our sin, our guilt, our shame?
- C** **How shall we stand, save robed in the righteousness of your righteous Son, our Savior, Jesus the Messiah?**
- P** And how shall we know his righteousness made ours unless you speak to us, opening our ears and healing our hearing by the power of your sanctifying Spirit,
- C** **that hearing, we may believe; and believing we may follow; and in following we may not be ashamed.**
- P** Work in us, O God, the miracle of healing faith,
- C** **faith in him whose blood was spilled to forgive us even when we fail and flee; faith in the forgiving love that returns us once again to the hard and pleasant paths of righteousness,**
- P** in Christ our Lord, by whom we pray:
- C** **Our Father ...**

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Service One —Malchus and Mark—

Sermonic Introduction (The preacher sets the scene for the drama.)

Ⓟ Do you believe in miracles? The Bible, of course, is full of them. Even the Passion History is interrupted by one—the healing of the ear of a man named Malchus, a servant of the high priest. What do you suppose Malchus would have said if you had asked him, “Do you believe in miracles?”

He got his miracle that night, even though he hadn’t been looking for one. Others that night, who might have been hoping for miracles, didn’t see what they were looking for. One young man, in fact, ran away naked in the confusion. He obviously did not find the miracle he had been looking for.

Christian tradition says that this man was Mark, the man whose name would later be ascribed to the Gospel according to St. Mark—a gospel full of miracles.

But not on that night. Not when he was looking for one. Not in the way he had hoped.

Do you suppose it is possible that Mark and Malchus ever met? That they had the opportunity to talk about what happened that night? Do you suppose it could have happened even on that very night? Probably not. But if such a conversation HAD taken place ...

That is the premise of the words you are about to overhear. But to do so you will have to use your imagination. It is late on the night of Holy Thursday. And as we draw near, Malchus and a friend (we'll call him Abner, a good biblical name) are returning to Jerusalem from the Garden of Gethsemane ...

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Service One

—Malchus and Mark—

The Drama

Cast Of Characters

Pastor, who delivers the Sermonic Introduction and Sermonic Conclusion.

Malchus, servant of the high priest, just miraculously healed at Gethsemane.

Mark, a young man who ran away from our Lord's capture, leaving his tunic behind.

Abner, Malchus' friend, a very small part at the beginning and end of the drama.

Drama

Abner Hey, Malchus, it's been some night, hasn't it?

Malchus Yeah, Abner. I'm still not sure what really happened.

Abner Me either. Hey, I've gotta stop on the next street and pick something up.

You coming?

Malchus No, I think I'll just keep going. I want some time to think.

Abner All right. I'll catch up with you then. Take your time.

Malchus Right. See you in a few minutes, Abner.

Mark *(pause, then softly, whispering)* Pardon me.

Malchus What?

Mark *(a little louder)* Pardon me. Could you ... could you help me?

Malchus *(confused)* Who *is* that? Where *are* you?

Mark Over here ... in the bushes.

Malchus Where? I can't see you.

Mark Over here.

Malchus It's so dark.

Mark Say, I'm afraid I have a rather embarrassing problem ...

Malchus *(startled, loudly)* Hey! You don't have any clothes on!

Mark Uh, yes. That's my problem. You see ...

Malchus *(interrupting)* You're stark naked!

Mark Can you lend me your coat?

Malchus *(still loud)* No, hold on! What *is* this?

Mark *(with emphasis)* Can you lend me your *coat*?

Malchus Are you some kind of a ...

Mark *(interrupting, impatiently)* Your *coat*!!! ... *(then, more softly, pleading)* Please.
It's not what you think. My clothes were ... uh ... taken.

Malchus *(suddenly concerned)* Oh, were you robbed?

Mark Well, sort of. You see ...

Malchus *(quite concerned)* Oh, I'm sorry. Are you hurt? Here, put this on.

Mark Thanks. I mean really, thanks. (*pause*) Hey, don't I know you from somewhere?

Malchus No, I don't think so. I ...

Mark Were you at the Mount of Olives tonight?

Malchus Well, yes. I ...

Mark (*brightening*) Sure. I thought you looked familiar. You're the guy with the *ear*.

Malchus (*incredulous*) You were *there*? You *saw* what happened?

Mark (*suddenly hesitant*) Well, I ...

Malchus (*pressing*) Were you there?

Mark (*fumbling*) Well, sort of ... that is ... I ...

Malchus You *were* there, weren't you? You must have been.

Mark (*after a pause, softly*) I ran away.

Malchus (*recognizing*) Oh, *you're* the one! They told me about you. That explains about your clothes.

Mark (*sheepishly*) Yeah.

Malchus You weren't *robbed*. You *escaped*.

Mark (*defensively*) I guess you could call it that. (*trying to change the subject*) And *you* were there to take part in the capture.

Malchus Right.

Mark You're not going to turn me in, are you?

Malchus (*smiling*) Hey, look, man. I'm only a servant. I was there because they told me to be. I've got no gripe against *you*.

Mark Thank God!

Malchus (*reflectively*) Besides, too much has happened tonight. I've got to have some time to think.

Mark Yeah, me too.

Malchus (*something is dawning*) But ... if you were *there* tonight ...

Mark You know I *was*.

Malchus Right, you're wearing my coat ...

Mark (*interrupting*) Yeah, thanks again.

Malchus (*continuing*) ... maybe you can tell me what happened there.

Mark What do you mean? They *captured* him; that's what happened.

Malchus That's what I mean. Who *was* he?

Mark You mean you don't know?

Malchus (*almost impatient*) Look, I told you. I'm a *servant*. I do what I'm told. They said they wanted a large group to go to the Garden of Gethsemane; that's all I know. Told me to bring a torch and a club ... it might be dangerous.

Mark I wish someone had told *me* that!

Malchus It *was* dangerous. Some crazy guy came at me with a sword.

Mark (*acknowledging*) That was Peter.

Malchus (*surprised*) You *know* him?

Mark (*after a pause, realizing he's caught*) Yeah ... I know him.

Malchus (*pouncing*) You *are* one of them, then!

Mark (*very defensive*) Look, all I said was that I *know* him. (*softer*) I saw the guy hit you with the sword ... on the side of the head ...

Malchus (*urging him on*) Yes ... then what?

Mark Looked to me like he got your *ear*.

Malchus That's what they tell me ... That's what it felt like.

Mark You're not sure?

Malchus All I remember was this terrible pain ... I reached up and my hand was full of blood ... and it felt like my ear was gone. It really did, I could swear ... (*confused*) But then I must have blacked out.

Mark (*softly*) He healed you.

Malchus (*urgent*) *Who* did? That's what I want to know.

Mark (*after a pause*) I can't tell you.

Malchus (*more urgent*) You've *got* to tell me!

Mark (*desperate*) I can't.

Malchus (*just as desperate*) But I've got to *know*! (*pause, then with more control*) Look, something happened there in the garden tonight, something I don't understand ...

Mark I don't understand any of it either.

Malchus I mean, to *me*! I got my ear cut off, but here it is right on the side of my head where it always was ... and it *works*! There's *blood*, all over my coat, the coat you're wearing. I've *got* to know what *happened*!

Mark He healed you.

Malchus (*pressing*) *Who* did?

Mark (*softly, after a pause*) Jesus.

Malchus (*surprised*) Jesus? *That* was Jesus? Jesus of Nazareth? The rabbi?

Mark (*agreeing*) The rabbi.

Malchus (*confused*) Why were they out to capture *him*?

Mark (*just as confused*) I don't know. It was *your* gang that did it.

Malchus But I thought it was one of *your* people who was leading the chase.

Mark (*suddenly defensive again*) Don't call them *my* people!

Malchus (*correcting*) One of *his* people, then ... all right?

Mark Judas.

Malchus (*brightly*) Right, that's the name: Judas. But *why*?

Mark (*getting upset*) I don't *know*! That's what I don't understand. Look, you've got your ear. Why don't you just leave it at that? You've had your miracle.

Malchus Miracle?

Mark What else would you call it?

Malchus (*trying out the idea*) Miracle.

Mark (*reflectively, almost to himself*) Funny, that's what I was looking for too, I guess ... a miracle. I still don't believe they actually captured him ... that he didn't escape ... walk away ... *run* away ... let Peter keep swinging his sword ...

Malchus Ouch!

Mark (*realizing*) Oh, sorry about that. But I really thought he'd *do* something.

Malchus He healed my ear.

Mark That's not what I mean.

Malchus What *do* you mean?

Mark (*groping*) I don't know how to tell you this ... but some of us thought that he really was ... (*blurts it out*) the promised Messiah.

Malchus The Messiah?

Mark Yeah. Sounds crazy, doesn't it? But it didn't sound crazy if you ever heard him, if you ever saw him ... if you ever watched him do the things he did ...

Malchus Like healing ears?

Mark Yeah, like healing all kinds of things. Blind people, deaf people ... paralytics, cripples, deranged people ...

Malchus And people with ears cut off.

Mark Yeah, I guess so. (*pause*) We had hoped ... we had *so hoped* that he would really be the one ... the one to redeem Israel ... the Messiah.

Malchus You were looking for another miracle.

Mark Yeah, I guess so. The *big* one. (*pause*) Funny, isn't it? I was looking for a miracle and nothing happened. You weren't looking for a miracle, and you got one. (*pause, then changing subject*) What do you think they'll do with him?

Malchus Jesus? I don't know. There was some talk about a trial ... even tonight, if they can get everybody together.

Mark *(surprised)* Tonight?

Malchus Yeah. I even heard some talk about handing him over the Romans for crucifixion.

Mark Oh, no!

Malchus Sorry, but that's what they were saying. You asked. No more miracles, I guess.

Mark I don't understand it.

Abner *(calling, from a distance)* Ma-a-a-a-a-achus!

Mark *(suddenly frightened)* Who's that?

Malchus They're calling me. I've got to go.

Abner *(calling, but closer)* Malchus! Are you there?

Mark Hey, you won't tell them I'm here, will you?

Malchus *(smiling)* No. You've got problems of your own.

Mark Oh, yeah. About the coat ...

Malchus Hey, keep it. You've had enough trouble for one night. Besides, it was all full of blood anyway.

Abner *(arriving, after a pause)* Hey, Malchus, you talking to somebody? Where've you been?

Malchus No ... I was just *(smiling)* getting rid of my coat.

Abner Oh, yeah. It was all full of blood, wasn't it? Hey, what really happened to you, anyway?

Malchus *(not too seriously)* Abner, do you believe in miracles?

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Service One —Malchus and Mark—

Sermonic Conclusion (The preacher comments on the drama.)

¶ We don't know whether it really happened that way, of course ... whether Mark and Malchus really met like that and held the conversation we have overheard. Probably they didn't.

But this imaginary conversation does raise some important questions ... like the question of miracles—why they don't happen when we would like them to, when we so desperately want them to. And why, when they do happen, they are so unexpected, and maybe even (to our thinking) misdirected.

It would appear that God just doesn't always do things according to our timetable ... that he does not "perform" for us, like a dog doing tricks, just because we want him to ... or even when we feel we need him to. He insists on being GOD ... and he insists on working his miracles in his own way, and at his own time.

Take Mark, for example, the man who lost his coat in the confusion of Gethsemane. If, as Christian tradition has it, that frightened runaway re-

ally was Mark (the Scriptures don't actually name him, but tradition does) ... and if that Mark is the same man who later ran away again, from St. Paul's first missionary journey as the Book of Acts records ... if that is the man who wrote the Gospel which bears the name of Mark ... then a miracle DID happen—the miracle of faith: Faith that was finally so strong and so convicted that it moved to written confession!

That was in the future, of course. At this point in the story, Mark wasn't sure what he believed any more. Life is like that sometimes, and miracles don't always occur on schedule. Along with Peter and the rest, Mark would have to see the events to their conclusion—the conclusion you and I already know from inspired documents like the book that bears the name of Mark. It is "The Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." That's how Mark's book begins. It ends with the crucifixion of that Son of God for the sins of the world, and the empty tomb which attests to his resurrection.

Do YOU believe in miracles? Malchus had no choice. His ear was healed. And as for US ... well, whether this conversation actually could have been overheard or not, the miracle of the Gospel—the death and resurrection of God's Messiah for each of us—remains to be heard ("He who has ears to hear, let him hear," Jesus once said) ... and to be believed.