



*There was a time when, if you were a boy or a man, most of your Christmas presents seemed to consist of slippers and socks. It's what you gave to people you didn't know what to get. Not bad gifts; helpful gifts; but maybe lacking that extra-special pizzazz that you might have been hoping for. Apologies to anyone who is planning to give slippers and socks this Christmas!*

*Maybe they're not such bad things after all. One Bible reading often used at Christmas tells us: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings, who publishes peace, who brings good tidings of good." Whose feet were these?*

*The feet of the donkey, carrying Mary to Bethlehem? Or the feet of Joseph, walking patiently beside her from Nazareth to Bethlehem?*

*The feet of the innkeeper - rushing around at that busy time, with no room for strangers.*

*The feet of angels dancing between heaven to earth*

*The feet of the animals in the place where the baby was born.*

*The feet of the shepherds, rushing from the cold, stony fields to the manger.*

*The feet of the Wise Men, on their long road from the East, to Jerusalem and then on the few short miles from that city to the little town of Bethlehem.*

*I hadn't thought about the many different feet there are in the Christmas readings. Not all of them came to bring good news. But some did.*

*I like the thought of the feet of the shepherds; running to and from Bethlehem, helping carry the story of the birth.*

*I like the thought of feet of the Wise Men, pacing over the long miles from their distant homes, bearing their gifts.*

*I like the thought of the feet of the angels, dancing between heaven and earth.*

*I like those tiny, little, baby feet of Jesus, being warmed from time to time in the hands of Mary and Joseph.*

*At Christmas time, like every other time of the year, people in the nursing world are often run off their feet, bringing help and hope and healing. My prayers and blessings are with you in the busy and the quiet times of this Christmas.*

*Rt. Rev Dr Derek Browning,*

*Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland*