

Bowled over by the glory  
of God

The apse mosaic from St. Catherine monastery in Sinai

Almighty God, you showed your glory and power to Peter, James and John on the holy mountain. Give us the courage to come into your presence, so that we too may glimpse your divine majesty and praise your glory. Amen.

## National Parks

by Jo Jones

*Jo Jones embarks on a five-part tour of some of the national Parks of Great Britain.*

National Parks were established as part of the reconstruction of Britain after the Second World War. People living in increasingly crowded, industrialised towns craved access to open country – access that was denied by increasing enclosure of land by landowners. In 1932 a mass trespass on Kinder Scout in the Peak District intensified pressure for change. In the 1950s the Peak District became the first

of fifteen national parks across England, Wales and Scotland, established to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of their area, promote enjoyment and understanding by the public and foster the economic and social well-being of local communities.

How often in the Bible the wilderness is the place where God is found. Designed to be in reach, we need to treasure these places, where our souls get a chance to breathe! [www.nationalparks.uk](http://www.nationalparks.uk)

*Jo lives near Newmarket, Suffolk and works on conserving the rare plants of the Brecks.* 🍷

“The only time my prayers are never answered is on the golf course.”

Billy Graham (1918-2018), evangelist

Lisa Tulfer *reflects on* Luke 9:28-36

Today's Gospel reading is the account of the transfiguration – where the glory of God and Jesus' divinity are revealed. This episode has been a favourite subject of icons in the Orthodox Christian tradition for centuries. The earliest known example is at St Catherine's Monastery in Sinai and dates from the sixth century. The convention in icons of the transfiguration is to depict Jesus glowing in shining white robes, radiating rays of divine light, with a golden halo. He is accompanied by Moses, who bears a scroll to symbolise the Law of the Old Testament, and Elijah, who represents the prophets and is dressed in animal skin, reminiscent of the prophet of Jesus' coming, John the Baptist. Their presence is said to indicate that Jesus is

the fulfilment of the Law and the prophets.

The three disciples are shown not standing, but fallen to the ground, bowled over by the glory of God. James, with beard, and John, who is beardless, to indicate his youth, turn their eyes away from the dazzling light. Grey-haired Peter, older and perhaps more able to deal with the majesty of the scene, half looks at Jesus and reaches out to him. In Luke, it is Peter who speaks: "It is good for us to be here."

It is clear that to ascend the mountain and witness the glory of Christ is an awe-inspiring, wonderful and unsettling experience.

*Lisa is a freelance writer and translator, specialising in history and the arts.* 🍷

## Mary Sumner

by Lisa Tulfer

*Mary Sumner, founder of the Mothers' Union, is commemorated on Wednesday. Lisa Tulfer looks at her life and legacy.*

Mary was born in 1828 into a middle-class family, to a mother who took her faith seriously and held mothers' meetings. Mary married an Anglican clergyman, and started leading meetings herself. In 1876, when her own daughter gave birth, inspired by her memories of how difficult she had found motherhood, she set up a group of mothers of all social classes for mutual support

in bringing up their children in the Christian faith.

In 1885 she was invited to speak at a congress in Portsmouth, and women took her ideas back to their own parishes. The movement soon spread to other dioceses; by 1892 there were sixty thousand members in twenty-eight dioceses. The Mothers' Union expanded into the British Empire and beyond, and now there are some four million members in eighty-four countries. Mary's organisation is now a powerful worldwide influencer on issues of gender equality, poverty and community transformation.

[www.mothersunion.org](http://www.mothersunion.org) 🍷