
THE NIGHT SCHOOL (TNS) 8, 3 – GANZ NOTES ON MADELEINE L'ENGLE (1918-2007)

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BETWEEN THE ASCENSION AND PENTECOST

Today is the anniversary of the day in 1980 when Mount St. Helens exploded.

A 5.1 earthquake on May 18 rattled the mountain, causing the bulge to burst and landslide down the mountain. Once the bulge was gone, the volcano's magma system was depressurized and blew off the top of the mountain, according to the USGS.

Ash, rock and hot gasses spewed into the air. Ash blanketed the Pacific Northwest and stretched to 11 states and Canada.

The blast reduced the mountain's height by 1,314 feet.

Autopsies showed that most of the people killed in the eruption likely died from asphyxiation after inhaling hot ash, according to the USGS.

In addition to human lives lost, an estimated 7,000 big game animals – such as deer, elk and bears – were also killed. Birds and small mammals also died.

The eruption damaged roughly 230 square miles of land around the volcano, according to the USDA Forest Service. It destroyed 158 miles of highway, 200 homes and 15 miles of railways, the USGS reported.

Washington State worked to remove about 900,000 tons of ash from highways and roads, according to the USGS. The International Trade Commission determined the

total cost of damage and rebuilding efforts from the eruption came to an estimated \$1.1 billion.¹

The Gospel today, from **John 17:1-11**, are an account of the private prayer of Jesus spoken (out loud?) to the Father. Verses 1-5 are these:

¹ When Jesus had said this, he raised his eyes to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come. Give glory to your son, so that your son may glorify you, ² just as you gave him authority over all people, so that he may give eternal life to all you gave him. ³ Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ. ⁴ I glorified you on earth by accomplishing the work that you gave me to do. ⁵ Now glorify me, Father, with you, with the glory that I had with you before the world began. ²

OPENING PRAYER

“Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest....”

WHO IS L’ENGLE ... TO YOU?

A Wrinkle in Time has been vastly influential in American childhoods ever since it was published, and it is this novel which is the dominant means by which people exclaim, “I love Madeleine L’Engle!”

How is it that *you* remember her?

¹ King 5 News Seattle - <https://www.king5.com/article/tech/science/environment/mount-st-helens/1980-mount-st-helens-eruption/281-57df606c-2333-4ac9-9d0f-c52d1c4ee32f>.

² [Catholic Daily Readings](#) (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2009).

BIOGRAPHICAL

C.S. Lewis - born **November 29th**, 1898, Belfast, United Kingdom; Madeleine L'Engle Camp – born **November 29th**, 1918. Exactly twenty years separate the ages of these two authors.

Britannica Online – “Madeleine L'Engle, original name in full Madeleine L'Engle Camp, married name Madeleine Franklin, (born November 29, 1918, New York, New York, U.S.—died September 6, 2007, Litchfield, Connecticut), American author of imaginative juvenile literature that is often concerned with such themes as the conflict of good and evil, the nature of God, individual responsibility, and family life.... In the [Newbery Medal](#)-winning [A Wrinkle in Time](#) (1962; film 2018), L'Engle introduced a group of young children who engage in a cosmic battle against a great evil that [abhors individuality](#). Their story continues in *A Wind in the Door* (1973), *A Swiftly Tilting Planet* (1978), and *Many Waters* (1986). In addition to her fiction for juveniles, L'Engle also wrote several books of fiction and [poetry](#) for adults. She discussed her life and writing career in *A Circle of Quiet* (1972), *The Summer of the Great-Grandmother* (1974), *The Irrational Season* (1977), *Walking on Water* (1980), and *Two Part Invention* (1988).”

Britannica Online – “**Newbery Medal**, annual award given to the author of the most distinguished American children's book of the previous year. It was established by Frederic G. Melcher of the R.R. Bowker Publishing Company and named for John Newbery, the 18th-century English publisher who was among the first to publish books exclusively for children. The first award was given in 1922. It is presented at the annual conference of the American Library Association along with the **Caldecott Medal**, an award to an artist for the best illustrations for a children's book.”

1963 Medal Winner: *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle (Farrar)

Honor Books:

- *Thistle and Thyme: Tales and Legends from Scotland* by Sorche Nic Leodhas, pseud. (Leclair Alger) (Holt)
- *Men of Athens* by Olivia Coolidge (Houghton)

Wikipedia - Hugh Hale Franklin (August 24, 1916 – September 26, 1986) was an American theatre and soap opera actor. He was born in Muskogee, Oklahoma. Franklin was best known for his role as Dr. Charles Tyler on *All My Children*, a role he played from the show's first episode in 1970 until 1983. He was forced to retire as his hearing loss, which had previously been gradual, started to affect his ability to receive cues. He also had roles on the soap operas *As the World Turns*, *Dark Shadows*, and *Love of Life*. Prior to *All My Children*, Franklin appeared in such Broadway productions as *The Joyous Season*, *I Know My Love* and *Medea*. Other theatre

credits include *Harriet*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *One Man Show* and *Alice in Wonderland*. He was married for 40 years to Newbery Medal-winning author Madeleine L'Engle. She wrote a book about their marriage, called *Two-Part Invention: The Story of a Marriage* (1988), and frequently mentioned him in her other non-fiction titles. Franklin died of cancer on September 26, 1986. He and L'Engle had three children: Josephine, Maria, and Bion Franklin.

QUOTES

“[George] MacDonald’s popularity has faded with time, though he retains a small, loyal following, and his *The Fairy and the Goblin* (1872) and *The Fairy and Curdie* (1883) are still read by children. But in his day, he inspired not a few of the 20th century’s favorite writers, like G.K. Chesterton, J.R.R. Tolkien, Madeleine L’Engle, and C.S. Lewis, to name four. ‘I have never concealed the fact that I regarded him as my master,’ wrote Lewis; “indeed I fancy I have never written a book in which I did not quote from him.”³

From the *New York Times* article announcing her death on 8 September 2007 – “*A Wrinkle in Time* was rejected by 26 publishers before editors at Farrar, Straus & Giroux read it and enthusiastically accepted it. It proved to be her masterpiece, winning the John Newbery Medal as the best children’s book of 1963, and selling, so far, eight million copies. It is now in its 69th printing.... The book uses concepts that Ms. L’Engle said she had plucked from Einstein’s theory of relativity and Planck’s quantum theory, almost flaunting her frequent assertion that children’s literature is literature too difficult for adults to understand.... ‘I think that fantasy must possess the author and simply use him,’ she said in an interview with *Horn Book* magazine in 1983. ‘I know that is true of *A Wrinkle in Time*. I cannot possibly tell you how I came to write it. It was simply a book I had to write. I had no choice. It was only after it was written that I realized what some of it meant.’”

“But I’m back, and grateful to be back, because, through God’s loving grace, I did meet enough people who showed me that light of love which the darkness cannot extinguish. **One of the things I learned on the road back is that I do not have to *be* right. I have to try to *do* what is right, but when it turns out, as happens with all of us, to be wrong, then I am free to accept that it was wrong, to say, “I’m sorry,” and to try, if possible, to make reparation.** But I have to accept the fact that I am often unwise; that I am not always loving; that I make mistakes; that I am, in fact, human. **And as Christians we are meant to be not less human than other people but more human, just as Jesus of Nazareth was more human.** [L'Engle, Madeleine. *Walking*

³ Mark Galli and Ted Olsen, [“Introduction,”](#) *131 Christians Everyone Should Know* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 125.

on Water (p. 51) in Chapter 3: “Healed, Whole, and Holy”. The Crown Publishing Group. Kindle Edition]

A BETTER STORY

“Philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre, in *After Virtue*, wrote, “I can only answer the question ‘What am I to do?’ if I can answer the prior question ‘Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?’” [Arthur, Sarah. *A Light So Lovely* (p. 83). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.]

Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*
Publisher: University of Notre Dame Press; 3rd edition (March 6, 2007)
Language: English
Paperback: 286 pages
ISBN-10: 0268035040
ISBN-13: 978-0268035044

“For believers who pray the same prayers week after week, who come to the Communion table expecting to be changed, we must claim that **it is possible for lives to be rescripted. We must assert that it’s possible for habits and language to be reshaped by a different, more powerful story.** The seeds for critiquing our behavior—indeed, for critiquing the tradition itself—are there inside the narrative we claim. **The radical call of faith is not to insist upon a set of universal principles about right and wrong, but to offer an alternative story by which lives can be shaped into new instincts, new practices, new ways of speaking and being in the world.** We want our teens to make a decision consistent with the better story of which they are a part, a decision that doesn’t even feel like a decision but a script they know by heart.

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I once heard a pastor contrast Ulysses’ actions with those of Orpheus. Son of the muse Calliope and the god Apollo, Orpheus was the greatest poet and musician of Greek legend. Like Ulysses, he too sailed with a ship’s crew past the Island of Sirens. But did he simply distribute the earplugs and hope for the best? No. The poet knew he could sing a more compelling song. He had a better story, a gift that would make the Sirens sound like the monsters they were. So as the ship passed the island, he played his lyre and told his tale. And the crew was so enchanted that not a man among them flung himself overboard.

Madeleine told a better story. This was her quest, to point others to the very same “light so lovely” that she herself had caught glimpses of through great literature as a child. Her stories were **icons** pointing to a source of truth beyond themselves and thus had formative potential for her readers.” [Arthur, Sarah. *A Light So Lovely* (pp. 90-91). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.]

THE POEMS

See my Ganz Notes on the individual poems.