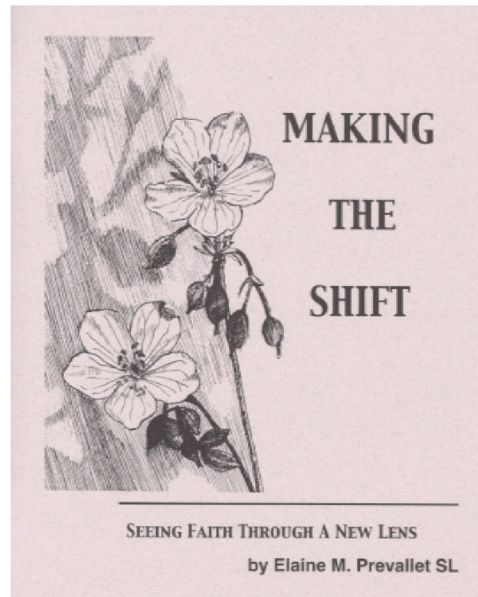


Publications by Elaine M. Prevallet SL



*We will try to probe the mystery of that self-awareness:
I am, you are, the universe
trying to understand our past so that we can appropriately shape our future.
We are the universe beginning to be conscious of itself as the universe.*

Most of us are aware that in the past decades we have, from different angles, undergone a series of quite profound transitions. We now view reality—ourselves, each other, the created world, our God—from a very different perspective than that of 20 years ago, let alone 40 or 50 or 70 years ago. A global shift in consciousness is afoot, we are told, a paradigm shift. Though its roots are, of course, in the distant past, in my own awareness it has been going on for half a century, a slow, piece-by-piece dismantling of a tidy, coherent world, both inner and outer. We will ponder the nature of that change and some of the factors that catalyzed it. The task that faces us is to become as conscious as we can of what is going on, so that we can participate in that change, figure out together what we need to know, what we need to do, what we need to know how to do to facilitate that change. Our survival as the human species on planet Earth may well hinge on whether or not we are able to learn quickly enough. I want to invite us to get in touch with what we know, in our own experience, to be true and to share both our experience and the wisdom we have gleaned as we have gone through this change so far...as well as the fears that pop up as we try to do this work.

To Order contact:

Elaine M. Prevallet SL
Loretto Motherhouse
515 Nerinx Road
Nerinx, KY 40049-9999

email: prevbooks@yahoo.com;
phone: 270-865-5943

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IN THE SERVICE of LIFE:

Widening and Deepening Religious Commitment

by Elaine M. Prevallet SL (60 pp.)

Reviewed by Ann Patrick Ware SL

How fortunate to have one of Loretto's finest thinkers turn her attention to issues both plaguing and enriching contemporary religious understanding. Among the plagues are consumerism, violence, pillage of our planet Earth, the passion for domination and control. At the same time this small booklet offers new insights into earth-spirituality, attentiveness to the needs of the times, a sense of what it means to be united in a global connection, and what all this may mean for a religious community and the vows that mold it.

Elaine Prevallet, whose own life has been shaped by years of contemplative study and quiet reflection, sets before the reader a lively introduction to the new cosmology. When you know how tiny Earth is in comparison with other stars in our galaxy and a hundred billion other galaxies, does it give you a sense of how precious this bit of creation is, how we're all together, depending on each other for our lives, she asks us.

A chapter on "Moving and Consuming" delineates cultural changes that can leave us inwardly and outwardly rootless—the loss of identity with a neighborhood, declining affiliation with a church, new family arrangements, mindless television-watching affecting our unconscious and subconscious. Still, Elaine points out, surveys indicate that 35 per cent of the U.S. population share a set of values at odds with the predominant culture and offer community-and-earth-conscious pockets of hope.

This study moves on to investigate the power of a fundamental spiritual unity at the ground of all creation in face of the threat of planetary destruction. What is the contribution of Christianity? of religious communities? of the traditional vows? Each of the vows is perceived as energy: poverty, the fundamental vow; obedience, the practical vow; celibacy, the distinctive vow. Readers who have made these vows, that is, members of religious orders, as well as those familiar with this state of life will find fresh new insights into their meaning and possibilities.

Sandy Ardoyno's drawings bring the wonder of creation before us on almost every page and form a delightful accompaniment to Elaine's beautiful prose with its wealth of facts, examples, and stories. Dear reader, you're going to love this little book!

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