

One song says "I AM *what* I AM."

Another says "I've been to PARADISE, *but* I've NEVER *been* to ME."

As summer winds down, bringing another season of parties and gay pride celebrations to an end, this may be a good time to remember that we are celebrating how God made us, a time to recognize the importance of being honest with ourselves and the world around us.

The gay anthem from *La Cage Au Folles* proclaims, "I am what I am, and what I am needs no excuses." How true this is; no excuses are necessary for God's handiwork. You are made in his image and likeness, an individual worthy of love and respect, who is irreplaceable.

In fact, awareness of yourself and a true understanding of your role in life is the first step on the road to holiness. Thomas Merton, the Trappist monk and well-known writer, once observed, "For me to be a saint means to be myself. Therefore the problem of sanctity and salvation is in fact the problem of finding out who I am and of discovering my true self... God leaves us free to be whatever we like. We can be ourselves or not, as we please. But the problem is this: since God alone possesses the secret of my identity, he alone can make me who I am or rather, he alone can make me who I will be when I at



SAINT JOAN OF ARC

last fully begin to be. The seeds that are planted in my liberty at every moment, by God's will, are the seeds of my own identity, my own reality, my own happiness, my own sanctity."

So who are you? The plaintive camp song from *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* complains, "I've been to paradise, but I've never been to me."



ST. FRANCIS

To be a saint means to be myself—everything I am meant to be.



SAINT THERESA of Lisieux

when you have a beer in your hand.

Have you been to you? Have you gotten to know yourself and your own unique role in the universe?

There is no single black-and-white response to the challenge of knowing who you are. But here's a place to start: by baptism, you are a child of God and heir to an ancient heritage of people like you who have faced the same question together. The Catholic tradition holds millennia of accumulated wisdom to help you discover your true self, who you are, unencumbered by the constraints of time and space.

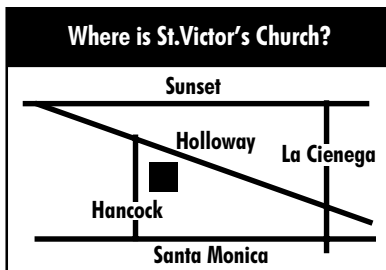
In the gay and lesbian community, many hunger for unconditional love that has often been denied them by parents, partners, politicians and yes, even priests. Many have felt unwelcome even in their own Church, to which they have a right to membership by baptism. At St. Victor's, the gay and lesbian community is welcome to reclaim their right to membership in the People of God, just as you are. No matter what your journey, no matter what your pain or hurt or history, you are welcome. **We extend a**

special invitation to you to attend our HIV Mass on Sunday, September 13 at 2:30 p.m., for those living with the virus and to remember those we have lost to it.

The most ancient name we have for God is *Yahweh*, "he who is." This name comes from the words Moses heard from the burning bush: "I am who am." To become truly God-like, you must be true to yourself in all your complexity, in all your turmoil, in all your splendor. Join us as we search together at St. Victor's, a parish that believes you are worth the trouble and smart enough to appreciate a timely thought from a Trappist monk, even when you have a beer in your hand.

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Located in the heart of West Hollywood

Rediscover Your Heritage at St. Victor's

Sunday Mass Schedule

Mass at 8:30 and 10:30 a.m.; 12:15 and 5:15 p.m. Our principal celebration, with choir, is at 10:30 a.m. and is followed by refreshments on the patio. Our Saturday Vigil Mass at 5:30 p.m. features Gregorian chant (sing along!).

Confessions

Saturdays 4:45 to 5:15 p.m.



Come home to St. Victor's.

St. Victor's Catholic Church ☎ 8634 Holloway Drive ☎ West Hollywood 90069 ☎ 310 652 6477