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## Sunday Mass in July

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## Sunday Mass in July

Saint John's Abbey

For mercy, we ask all too briefly, embarrassed, in phrases blurred, their words knocking at the edges, rushing themselves, overlapping like waves of an eager sea.

Glory, we sing, who later sit on the black pews in summer heat, fanning our faces with the worship aid, our feet perched on the kneelers to ease the sweat forming beneath our knees.

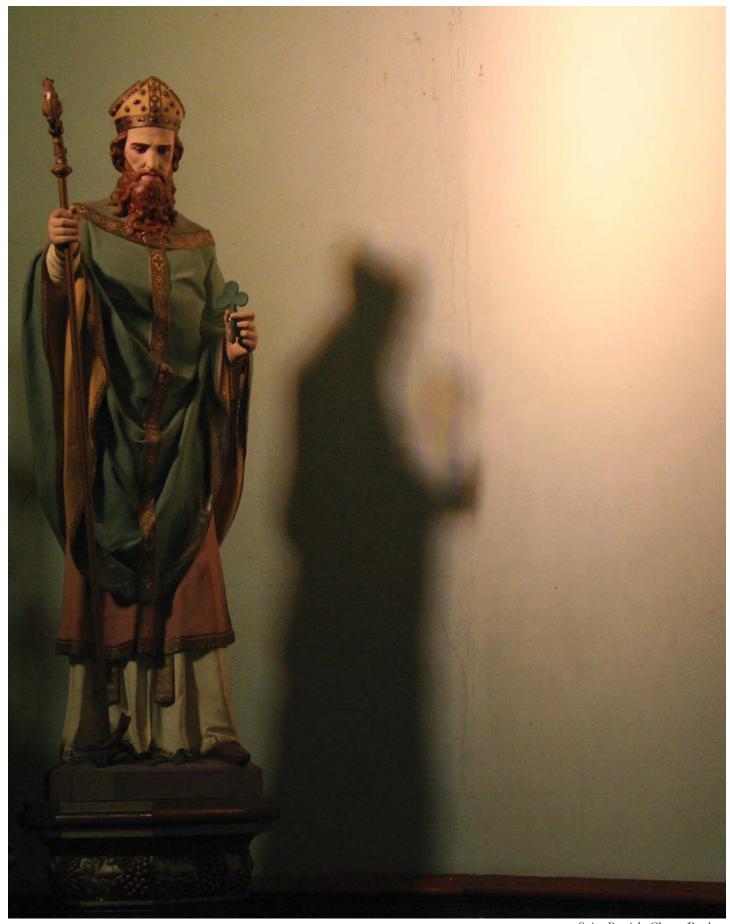
I tremble as I read the Lesson, my voice a small thin needle sewing sound from ear to ear. A spider crawls across the cool brick floor: I almost wish I were it.

Our belief, like pleas for mercy, churns muffled, nearly deadened, as if it traveled a great distance to arrive at this vast stone church, nobody quite together.

Beside the windows, bursting tiger lilies – and last night's lightning storm in the southern sky strobing and streaking its cloudy cavern – thrice proclaim with us: Holy.

The body-bread blossoms within, watered by wine. For another week I'm tended by the patient Gardener, able yet to spread by inch, or half, the Spirit's tendril vine upon my trellis-life.

We leave in peace, the priest signing us with the cross in the torrid air. What was the word that, spoken, we might be healed? Was it that low thunder throughout that, like the organ, made all our innards warble like unfed sparrows?



Saint Patrick, Chase Becker

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