



Belmont Abbey
COLLEGE
*That in all things God
may be glorified*

For Immediate Release

Contact: Sarah Bolton

P: 704-461-7016 E: sarahbolton@bac.edu

Belmont Abbey College Celebrates Largest Graduating Class in School History at 147th Commencement

Belmont, N.C. (May 17, 2025) – Today, Belmont Abbey College celebrated its 147th Commencement Ceremony, marking the largest graduating class in the college's history with 360 graduates.

The day's festivities began with a baccalaureate Mass held on the piazza of the Abbey Basilica, presided over by the Most Reverend Michael T. Martin, O.F.M. Conv., Bishop of Charlotte. The graduation ceremony followed, led by Chancellor Abbot Placid Solari, O.S.B., and President Dr. Bill Thierfelder.

This year's class included 24 nursing graduates—the second cohort to complete Belmont Abbey's growing nursing program. The ceremony also recognized a notable number of student-athletes, underscoring the college's commitment to its mission of "sport and virtue," which fosters both academic excellence and athletic achievement. In addition, several legacy families celebrated the graduation of another child, a powerful testament to the enduring values passed down through generations at the Abbey. The class also included 24 graduates from the Honors College Scholarship program and 21 scholars from the Hintemeyer Catholic Leadership Scholarship program, exemplifying a continued dedication to leadership, service, and intellectual growth.

"Each of our graduates is the answer to Abbot Leo Haid's hope and prayer that they would quite literally be God's blessing over this beautiful country in the years to come," said Dr. Bill Thierfelder, President of Belmont Abbey College. "I am forever grateful for the wonderful example of our graduates, faculty, coaches, staff, and monastic community who are committed to living lives of excellence and virtue in all that they do."

A highlight of the ceremony was the presentation of the 2025 Student of the Year award to Germaine Hanley, honored for exemplifying the ideals of the Abbey: academic excellence, steady leadership, meaningful involvement, and the daily pursuit of virtue both inside and outside the classroom. Each year the baccalaureate Mass homily serves as the commencement address. In lieu of a traditional commencement speaker during the graduation ceremony, Belmont Abbey continues its unique tradition of featuring the Student of the Year as the primary speaker—placing the focus on student success and voices.

The College also awarded honorary degrees to three distinguished individuals: Bishop Michael T. Martin, Kenneth Christopher Peek, and Dr. Josef F. Schmid III, recognizing their exemplary contributions to their fields and their alignment with the college's values and commitment to excellence and virtue so that in all things God may be glorified. In addition, Dr. Thierfelder received an honorary degree in recognition of his 21 years of visionary leadership and unwavering dedication to Belmont Abbey College.

This year's commencement also held special meaning as it marked Dr. Thierfelder's final graduation as president of the college. Under his leadership, Belmont Abbey has experienced unprecedented growth and success—in academics, athletics, and campus development. His commitment to Catholic higher education and student formation leaves a lasting legacy that will continue to shape the Abbey community for generations to come.

For more information about Belmont Abbey College and its programs, visit www.belmontabbeycollege.edu.

About Belmont Abbey College: Founded in 1876, Belmont Abbey College is a private, Catholic baccalaureate and liberal arts institution. Our mission is to educate students in the liberal arts and sciences so that in all things God may be glorified. Guided by the Catholic intellectual tradition and the Benedictine spirit of prayer and learning, we welcome a diverse body of students and provide them with an education that will enable them to lead lives of integrity, to succeed professionally, to become responsible citizens, and to be a blessing to themselves and to others. Our beautiful and historic campus is conveniently located just 10 miles west of Charlotte, N.C., and is currently home to more than 1500 students. For more information, visit <https://belmontabbeycollege.edu/>.