Belmont Abbey's Notable Record

The First Abbot of Belmont

The late Right Reverend Leo Had, D. S. B., D.D., first Abbot of Bel­mont, was the subject of a spe­cific topic of interest in the history of the Abbey. He was the thirtieth Bishop of Baltimore, and his ordination was celebrated in 1877 in the Cathedral of St. Mary's, Baltimore. Father Had was born in St. Louis, Missouri, on January 17, 1815, and was educated at the University of Notre Dame.

His early association with the Catholic Church was with the Jesuits, and he was ordained a priest in 1836. He served as the first abbot of the new Abbey in 1877, and he remained in that position until his death on July 12, 1878. He was succeeded by Father Casimir Schenck, O. S. B., who served as the second abbot of the Abbey from 1878 to 1883.

The Abbey of Belmont was established in 1877 by the Benedictine monks of St. Benedict's Abbey in Baltimore. The original community consisted of twelve monks, and the Abbey was located on a farm purchased for $7,000. The new community was dedicated to St. Benedict of Nursia, and the Abbey was named in his honor.

Father Had was instrumental in the establishment of the Abbey, and he served as its first abbot. He was a man of great learning and piety, and he was known for his dedication to the spiritual and educational needs of the monks and the laypeople of the diocese.

During his tenure as abbot, Father Had worked tirelessly to establish and develop the Abbey. He was responsible for the construction of the Abbey buildings, the acquisition of land for the monastery, and the establishment of the Benedictine seminary.

In recognition of his contributions to the Church, Father Had was named the first abbot of the Abbey of Belmont. He was succeeded by Father Casimir Schenck, O. S. B., who served as the second abbot of the Abbey from 1878 to 1883.

The Abbey of Belmont has continued to thrive under the guidance of its subsequent abbots, and it has become a center of religious and educational activity in the diocese of Raleigh.