

2026 Cardinal Kung, A Defender of the Faith Scholarship



To honor Ignatius Cardinal Kung Pin-Mei's heroic fidelity to the Church (1901-2000), The Cardinal Kung Foundation is pleased to offer **Cardinal Kung, A Defender of The Faith Scholarships**:

Current high school students in the United States who plan on a 2026 Fall entry to a college recommended in the *Newman Guide* or to a Catholic seminary are eligible.

- **A Scholarship of \$2,000** will be awarded to one (1) high school senior entering for freshman year in the fall of 2026.
- **Additional awards of \$1000 each** may be awarded to outstanding applicants, at the discretion of the Foundation.
- *Some Newman Colleges extend the Foundation's award to the student's 2nd through 4th year if the scholarship winner enrolls at that college. Please check the colleges' websites usually under "Scholarship and Financial Aid".*

Ignatius Cardinal Kung Pin-Mei, Bishop of Shanghai, China was a renowned educator in Shanghai, and a prisoner for Christ for thirty-two years under the current Chinese communist government. Saint Pope John Paul II named him **Cardinal in pectore** in 1979 while he was serving a life sentence in China. In 1991, he was publicly proclaimed Cardinal. Saint Pope John Paul II referred to Cardinal Kung as:

".... a man who has given witness by word and deed, through long suffering and trials, to what constitutes the essence of Life in the Church, participation in the divine life through the apostolic faith and evangelical love."

Prior to his arrest in 1955, Bishop Kung vigorously engaged in practical activities to prepare himself and the Church in Shanghai for coming persecutions. He visited all parishes to encourage weekly devotions such as adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, public recitation of the rosary, and praying the Passion of the Cross. He strengthened catechetical training in all parishes to enable the faithful to defend their faith against communism. He trained hundreds of lay Catholics, especially youth, as catechists to pass on the faith to future generations when most clergy and nuns would be jailed or martyred.

To encourage today's youth to follow Cardinal Kung's commitment to practical activity in the service of Christ and His Church, the scholarships will be awarded based on the student's demonstrated commitment to actively promoting and defending their faith.

Recommended resources:

Biography: Ignatius, The Life of Ignatius Cardinal Kung Pin-Mei by Monsignor Stephen M. DiGiovanni, H.E.D, an Advisor on the Board of the Cardinal Kung Foundation. (Available from Amazon.com in print or kindle edition)

A Summary of the life of Cardinal Kung by +Rev. Joseph Koterski, S.J., former Director of The Cardinal Kung Foundation.
<https://soundcloud.com/churchofsaintagnes/cardinalkung?in=churchofsaintagnes/sets/saintagnes-quick-talks>

Homily of Raymond Cardinal L. Burke on Cardinal Kung and the current situation in China given at the Pontifical Requiem Mass, Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the death of Ignatius Cardinal Kung Pin-Mei March 15, 2025, San Francisco, CA.

<http://www.cardinalkungfoundation.org/fd/pdf/SERMON%20Cardinal%20Burke%20Mass%2025th%20Anniv%20of%20Death%20of%20Cardinal%20Kung.pdf>

For information on the underground church and Cardinal Kung, please visit www.cardinalkungfoundation.org.

APPLICATION

Applicants must show *excellence in living, promoting and defending the Catholic faith*. Excellence can be demonstrated with a consistent record of service to the Church. For example:

- Leading efforts to promote the Catholic faith or preparing for this service
- Organizing or participating in events on living the Catholic faith in family, school or parish
- Teaching the Catholic faith to others in parish or in school
- Engaging in discussions and debates about faith
- Studying the faith diligently for the sake of working with this *knowledge* in the future.
- Showing how their life, training and accomplishments reflect Cardinal Kung's life.

Application Requirements

1. **Timeline for submissions and announcement of awards:** Submissions will be accepted from **December 1, 2025 until January 12, 2026, 11:59 PM Eastern Time**. Documents emailed after the deadline will be disqualified.
2. **The awards will be announced on March 12, 2026**, the anniversary of Cardinal Kung's death. This will be posted on the Cardinal Kung Foundation's website: <http://www.cardinalkungfoundation.org>
3. **Application:** A **cover sheet** listing the following: Applicant's full name, address, e-mail address, telephone number, name and address of the high school, graduation date, name of college or university in Fall 2026, and age, Name(s) of the reference.
4. A **resume** of pertinent activities.
5. A **500 word essay**, written by the applicant that details the applicants current activities in promoting and defending his Catholic faith and his plan to become a defender of the faith, including what experiences have led him to consider this as the most effective path for him to pursue. While the essay should be well written, the applications will be judged mainly on the student's activities and the preparation for such ability. The essay must explain why the applicant has chosen to devote time to these activities.
6. At least one **confidential letter of recommendation** from someone, preferably not a family member who is familiar with the applicant's activity as a defender of the faith. It should attest to the applicant's practicality in serving the Church and his or her commitment in defending the faith. The recommendations must be **emailed by the writer directly to the Foundation. Letters should be PDFs with the document title syntax as listed above.**
7. Documents must include those listed below and be submitted as **PDF file** attachments (with **College Scholarship in the Subject line**) to: cardinalkungfdn@gmail.com Document title syntax should be as follows:
 - a. Lastname.firstname.coversheet
 - b. Lastname.firstname.resume
 - c. Lastname.firstname.essay
 - d. Lastname.firstname.reference1
 - e. Lastname.firstname.reference2

Acceptance of the Award

Scholarship Recipients must contact The Foundation by email (by April 1, 2026) to accept the award and the following terms:

1. A statement (by April 1, 2026) to agree to allow The Foundation to publish their names, a brief bio, and the Newman college of their choice to be posted on the Foundation's website/newsletter.
2. To submit to the Foundation by June 1, 2026, for the Foundation's possible publication, a brief statement (about 250 words) that provides some insight into the benefits gained through the award and through reading the Cardinal's biography. (See Recommended Resources above)
3. **The Scholarships payment will be sent in July 2026** directly to the Newman college/seminary in which the student enrolls. The payment may be applied towards tuition, room and board payment, or for book fees required for college coursework. **Failure to provide proof of enrollment by July 1, 2026 will result in forfeiture of the award.**