

About His Eminence Soane Patita Paini Cardinal Mafi of Tonga

Keynote Speaker



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"Soane Patita Paini Mafi, M.S. '00, Nominated to College of Cardinals"

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By Nick Alexopoulos

<http://www.loyola.edu/news/2015/0105-mafi-cardinal>

Loyola University Maryland alumnus Soane Patita Paini Mafi has been nominated by Pope Francis to the Catholic Church's College of Cardinals.

Mafi, who received an M.S. in Pastoral Counseling from Loyola in 2000, currently serves as bishop of the diocese of Tonga. He was nominated on Jan. 4 along with 14 other men and will be appointed during a consistory on Feb. 14 in Vatican City.

"It's very meaningful for me that Loyola's Jesuit education had a particular influence on Bishop Mafi's formation and development as a priest and pastoral minister," said Rev. Brian F. Linnane, S.J., president of Loyola. "His nomination is telling of the pope's interest in bringing bishops into leadership who are very pastoral and concerned for the needs of the people, particularly the most vulnerable."

Mafi was born in the Kingdom of Tonga on Dec. 19, 1961, and ordained a priest in June 1991. He served in Church leadership roles in two Tonga parishes before enrolling in Loyola's pastoral counseling program in 1998. He then returned to Tonga to become a parish priest in a village on the kingdom's largest island, and went on to serve as a professor, trainer, and vice-rector at the Pacific Regional Seminar in Fiji.

He was appointed coadjutor bishop of Tonga in June 2007 and became the country's lone bishop in April 2008.

The 53-year-old Patita Mafi is the youngest of the new cardinal nominees and the first ever from Tonga.

"[The] new cardinals ... coming from 14 countries on every continent, show the inseparable bond between the Church of Rome and the particular Churches present in the world," the Vatican said in a press release.

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