

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

June 23, 2011 at 5:00pm

Mercedes to unveil new eco-friendly popemobile

by Niels Sorrells by Religion News Service

BERLIN -- Pope Benedict XVI has a lot of ground to cover when he heads back home to Germany this September, but thanks to a new popemobile from Mercedes, at least 30 of those kilometers (18.5 miles) will be on the greener side.

The Vatican has contracted with Mercedes for the first-ever hybrid popemobile, according to a report by business magazine *Wirtschaftswoche*. Citing company sources associated with the top-secret project, the magazine reported that the vehicle, based on Mercedes' M Class, would come with both a battery and a gasoline engine.

It was never considered, according to the report, to resort to an entirely battery-powered car since security threats require the pope to always have the option of a quick getaway.

The new hybrid engine would allow the popemobile to go 30 kilometers (about 18.5 miles) purely on battery power, which would require a one-hour plug-in charge. The car reportedly runs on a lithium-ion battery and a 60-horsepower hybrid engine.

Mercedes has been providing vehicles for the Vatican for eight decades. The iconic popemobile was first used in the 1980s, when Pope John Paul II yearned for a vehicle that would let him have closer contact to people during his overseas visits.

Neither the website of Mercedes, nor its parent company, Daimler, made any mention of a possible new hybrid popemobile.

September's four-day visit is Benedict's first official state visit to his native Germany since ascending to the papacy in 2005, though he has visited privately several times.

Advertisement

Source URL (retrieved on 02/22/2018 - 11:25am): <https://www.ncronline.org/news/mercedes-unveil-new-eco-friendly-popemobile>

Links:

[1] <https://www.ncronline.org/donate?clickSource=article-end>

[2] <https://www.ncronline.org/node/160616>