

Pontiff considers solar-powered popemobile



Pope Benedict XVI arrives in the popemobile for Mass in Nationals Park April 17, 2008 in Washington. (Owen Sweeney III, Catholic Review)

Could Pope Benedict XVI soon be tooling around in a solar-powered popemobile? A [snip](#) from the AP:

Anyone have a fast, solar-powered electric popemobile for his holiness?The Vatican says [Pope Benedict XVI](#) would gladly use one as another sign of his efforts to promote sustainable energy and take care of the planet, but one has yet to be offered.

Cardinal Giovanni Lajolo, who runs the Vatican City state, said Wednesday Benedict would certainly prefer an electric popemobile to a traditional, petroleum-powered one given the priority he has given to making the Vatican a leader in green energy.

His comments came during a presentation of a book on the Vatican's ecological efforts: "The Energy of the Sun in the Vatican." The [book documents](#) the 2008 installation of photovoltaic cells on the roof of the Vatican's main auditorium and the 2009 installation of a solar cooling unit for its main cafeteria.

The technology has won awards and garnered Benedict a reputation as the "green pope."

The Germany-based firm SolarWorld, which provided the photovoltaic cells on the auditorium, said Wednesday it has discussed the idea of providing the pope with a solar-powered electric car.

SolarWorld marketing chief Milan Nitzschke said the main hurdle is to get the Vatican security apparatus to sign off on it, since some still have concerns — unfounded, he said — that electric cars don't accelerate as quickly as traditional ones.

"It's really no problem," he said, noting that electric cars can go from 0-100 kph in three seconds.

"This is something we have to discuss with the people who are in charge of the security aspect, but of course this is possible and it would be a very, very huge symbol."