

Why the pope wore that ‘Santa hat’



Catholic News Service photo/Giancarlo Giuliani, Catholic Press Photo

A few days before Christmas in the first year of his papacy, Pope Benedict XVI sported a red velvet cap trimmed with ermine.

Known as a “camauro,” the old-fashioned headwear promptly earned the nickname “Santa hat” among some. Others questioned why the German pontiff seemed to be reviving a papal fashion not seen in many decades.

The pope answers the questions in his new book.

Catholic News Service has the story:

“I wore it only once,” (the pope said). “I was just cold, and I happen to have a sensitive head. And I said, since the camauro is there, let’s put it on. But I was really just trying to fight off the cold,” he said.

The pope’s appearance in the cap caused a minor uproar in the media, which saw it as a kind of pre-Vatican II fashion statement. In the book, the pope said he hasn’t put it on since that day, “in order to forestall over-interpretation.”