



## Mercedes-Benz

Press Information

December 4, 2024

### Pope Francis receives first electric “Popemobile” from Mercedes-Benz

- Handcrafted one-off based on the new electric G-Class fulfils high requirements
- Vehicle to be handed over in time for the 2025 Jubilee and contributes to the realisation of the encyclical “Laudato Si”
- Pope Francis invites CEO Ola Källenius and the team involved from Graz, Sindelfingen and Rome to a private audience
- Long tradition continues: Mercedes-Benz has been supplying cars to the Vatican for almost 100 years

Vatican/Stuttgart. Mercedes-Benz has been supplying cars to the Vatican for 94 years and for the past 45 years, the Pope has been using the renowned “Popemobiles” based on the Mercedes-Benz G-Class. Now, for the first time, the Popemobile from Mercedes-Benz is going all-electric: Mercedes-Benz CEO Ola Källenius and the team members involved personally handed over a handmade unique vehicle based on the new electric G-Class to Pope Francis in the Vatican today.

This means that the Pope will be travelling locally emission-free in a new Mercedes-Benz in time for the 2025 Jubilee – an event that only takes place every 25 years and one for which millions of pilgrims are expected in Rome. The vehicle fulfils high requirements and was developed in close cooperation with the Vatican specifically for the Pope's use. Its electric drivetrain, which was adapted to the particularly low speeds required for public appearances, contributes to the realisation of the encyclical “Laudato Si”. In it, Pope Francis describes the need for sustainable development.

At the handover, Ola Källenius thanked Pope Francis and all those involved and emphasised the sustainable business strategy of Mercedes-Benz:

“With the new Popemobile, Pope Francis is the first pope to be travelling in a fully electric Mercedes-Benz when making public appearances. This is a special honour for our company, and I would like to thank His Holiness for his trust. With this Popemobile, we are also sending out a clear call for electromobility and decarbonisation. Mercedes-Benz not only stands for the special and individual – but also for consistently creating the conditions for a net-carbon-neutral<sup>1</sup> new car fleet in 2039.”

Ola Källenius, Chairman of the Board of Management of Mercedes-Benz Group AG

#### **A unique experience: Pope Francis invites participating team members from Graz, Sindelfingen and Rome**

Ola Källenius was accompanied by Britta Seeger, Member of the Board of Management responsible for Sales and Marketing, and Marc Langenbrinck, CEO of Mercedes-Benz Italia, at the appointment just outside St Peter's Basilica. But the Holy Father also met with those who developed and built his new vehicle. Employees from Design, Research & Development, Manufacturing and Sales & Marketing were therefore also

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<sup>1</sup> Net carbon-neutral means that carbon emissions that are not avoided or reduced at Mercedes-Benz are compensated for by certified offsetting projects.

invited to the event and were able to hand over “their” vehicle on behalf of many others involved. The handover was followed by a private audience with the Pope. A team of specialists from Graz (A), Sindelfingen (D) and Rome (I) worked together for around a year. The project was managed by the team in Rome while the electric drivetrain was adapted by the team in Graz. The experts from Sindelfingen produced the bodywork, interior fittings and customised equipment using traditional craftsmanship.

#### **Handmade model: Details of the vehicle based on the new G580 with EQ technology**

The electric drivetrain of the new G580 with EQ technology (combined energy consumption: 30.4-27.7 kWh/100 km | Combined CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 0 g/km | CO<sub>2</sub> class: A)<sup>2</sup> was adapted to fully utilise the advantages of the four near-wheel motors for the special purpose of slow journeys at public appearances. In the rear, the bench seat was replaced by a centrally positioned and height-adjustable single seat. This swivelling main seat makes it possible to move around flexibly and address an audience from different angles. Behind the single seat, two single seats have been integrated on the left and right for additional passengers.

The roof was removed at the B-pillar, and the B-pillar itself was harmoniously transitioned into the side wall to create an unmistakable side profile. In case of rain or bad weather conditions, a separate hardtop offers protection for the occupants. The left rear door was removed and rebuilt by the specialists – in traditional coachbuilding style – from a single piece and seamlessly welded into the bodyshell. On the right-hand side, the hinges of the rear door were relocated to the opposite side.

Like the previous Popemobiles, the vehicle is painted in classic pearl white on the outside.

#### **A long tradition: The history of Mercedes-Benz vehicles for the Vatican**

Mercedes-Benz has been manufacturing vehicles for the head of the Catholic Church and his travels and public appearances for almost 100 years. The first vehicle of this type was a Nürburg 460 Pullman Saloon for Pope Pius XI from 1930. At the time, Mercedes-Benz was awarded the delivery contract due to a harmonious overall package – and because the team at the time transferred an important characteristic of previous carriages to the vehicle: The possibility of travelling with two dignitaries and other staff using folding seats. In the 1960s, John XXIII received a 300 Landaulet with an automatic transmission and extended wheelbase. His successor Paul VI initially used a 600 Pullman Landaulet and later a 300 SEL – also a Landaulet. In the 1980s, John Paul II used the first vehicle officially called Popemobile for events in St Peter's Square, a modified 460 series G model. From 2002, he used a 463 series G 500, which was also used by his successors Benedict XVI and Francis. Specially-designed cars based on the Mercedes-Benz M-Class and the GLE were also used at times. After their retirement from service, some of the Popemobiles were placed for viewing in the Vatican and the Mercedes-Benz Museum in Stuttgart.

#### **Statements from Britta Seeger, Marc Langenbrinck, Gorden Wagener and participating team members**

“We build the perfect Mercedes for every customer – including, for almost 100 years, the Vatican. We are overjoyed to be able to fulfil the Holy Father's wish for an electric Popemobile and are particularly proud to be able to build the vehicle according to his requirements. This cooperation at eye level honours us deeply and is a valuable symbol of sustainable change together.”

Britta Seeger, Member of the Board of Management of Mercedes-Benz Group AG, responsible for Sales & Marketing

“The G-Class is one of Mercedes-Benz's most iconic vehicles and we are proud that we can develop vehicles for the Holy Father in this tradition. The first all-electric G-Class combines sustainability, elegant design and maximum functionality. It is a great honour for us to be able to present this special vehicle to Pope Francis today.”

Gorden Wagener, Chief Design Officer Mercedes-Benz Group AG

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<sup>2</sup> The specified values were determined in accordance with the WLTP (Worldwide harmonised Light vehicles Test Procedure) measurement method. The ranges given refer to ECE markets. The energy consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of a car depend not only on the efficient utilisation of the fuel or energy source by the car, but also on the driving style and other non-technical factors.

“Today we are experiencing an important moment that underlines the deep bond that has united Mercedes-Benz Italy and the Vatican for more than half a century. As Pope Francis emphasizes, business must be an integral part of the community. Thus, it is a great honor for us to contribute to this unique project. On behalf of the large family of Mercedes-Benz Italy, I would like to extend to the Holy Father my sincerest wishes for his well-being and the fruitful continuation of his Magisterium. We look forward to a wonderful Jubilee and we are certain that ‘our Papamobile’ will be a valuable support for His Holiness in the many engagements that await him.”

Marc Langenbrinck, Mercedes-Benz Cars Italy Sales & Head of Mercedes-Benz Italy

“I’m very proud that I was able to contribute to the electric Popemobile. From the first sketch to the final sign-off, the team’s work was characterised by great passion, professionalism and respect for the task. The vehicle represents an incredible amount of manual labour and passion – but it’s also full of state-of-the-art technology. The fact that Pope Francis has invited some of us to hand it over personally really tops everything off. It’s an experience that you’ll tell your grandchildren about.”

Klaus Millerferli, Development Engineer at Mercedes-Benz AG in Sindelfingen

“With the G-Class, we are used to working on one of the most legendary and iconic Mercedes-Benz models on a daily basis. Building a vehicle for the Pope is something also very special for us – but even here we have experience. The entire team in Graz is very happy and proud that the Vatican is once again relying on our G.”

Peter Zotter, Development Engineer at Mercedes-Benz G GmbH in Graz

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#### Mercedes-Benz AG at a glance

Mercedes-Benz AG is part of the Mercedes-Benz Group AG with a total of around 166,000 employees worldwide and is responsible for the global business of Mercedes-Benz Cars and Mercedes-Benz Vans. Ola Källenius is Chairman of the Board of Management of Mercedes-Benz AG. The company focuses on the development, production and sales of passenger cars, vans and vehicle-related services. Furthermore, the company aspires to be the leader in the fields of electric mobility and vehicle software. The product portfolio comprises the Mercedes-Benz brand with Mercedes-AMG, Mercedes-Maybach and G-Class with their all-electric models as well as products of the smart brand. Mercedes-Benz AG is one of the world's largest manufacturers of luxury passenger cars. In 2023 it sold around two million passenger cars and 447,800 vans. In its two business segments, Mercedes-Benz AG is continually expanding its worldwide production network with more than 30 production sites on four continents, while gearing itself to meet the requirements of electric mobility. At the same time, the company is constructing and extending its global battery production network on three continents. As sustainability is the guiding principle of the Mercedes-Benz strategy and for the company itself, this means creating lasting value for all stakeholders: for customers, employees, investors, business partners and society as a whole. The basis for this is the sustainable business strategy of the Mercedes-Benz Group. The company thus takes responsibility for the economic, ecological and social effects of its business activities and looks at the entire value chain.