

Towards COP26: The Pope's fleet goes greener

On Saturday 5 June Nissan donated an electric Nissan Leaf to the Vatican at a ceremony in the Vatican.

His Eminence Cardinal Giuseppe Bertello, President of the Governatorate of the Vatican City State, presided over the handover ceremony in the presence of Marco Toro, Managing Director for Nissan Italy; Sally Axworthy, British Ambassador to the Holy See; and Seji Okada, Japanese Ambassador to the Holy See. Nissan's Sunderland factory joined by video-link.

The Nissan Leaf was produced in Sunderland in the north-east of England. Nissan is committed to producing vehicles sustainably: the production of the Nissan Leaf, as well as the car itself, is expected to reach net zero emissions within two years.

Sally Axworthy, British Ambassador to the Holy See, said:

'Transitioning to electric vehicles will be an essential part of our collective efforts to keep global temperature rises below 1.5 degrees. In the year in which the UK will host the climate summit, COP26, I am really delighted that the Vatican is greening its vehicle fleet with the help of Nissan. This sets an excellent example for us all.

'The UK has committed to reach net zero by 2050 and will end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars in the UK by 2030. The vehicle's production in Sunderland shows how technology can bring sustainable economic growth and dignified employment'.

Seji Okada, Ambassador of Japan to the Holy See stated:

"The Japanese Prime Minister Suga declared that Japan aims to realise a decarbonised society by reducing greenhouse gas emission to zero as a whole by 2050, and that the Government of Japan will work for the utilisation of decarbonised power sources, such as renewable energy. But, he added, "global decarbonisation cannot be achieved through the efforts of one country alone, it is a challenge that requires the whole international community to act in one".

As Pope Francis called for urgent action on climate change, it is particularly significant that the Vatican will gradually replace its service vehicles with an all-electric fleet, setting an example for all other countries of the world. The contributions of companies like Nissan will be vital to achieving this aim".

Note for editors:

- Sunderland plant is Nissan's central manufacturing hub in Europe. The

north-east of England had been a centre for coalmining, shipbuilding and steel, but by the 1980s most of that had gone. Nissan opened in 1986. It is the biggest automotive plant in the UK, producing 500,000 vehicles a year, more than 1500 per day. The factory employs 6,000 people and more than 30,000 rely on the plant for employment. They have made 200,000 Leafs since 2013. They built the UK's first battery plant on site. The workforce is mainly local.

- At the Climate Ambition Summit in December 2020, Pope Francis committed the Vatican City State to achieving [net zero emissions by 2050](#). As part of this effort, the Vatican are gradually replacing all their combustion engine cars with electric or hybrid vehicles.
- In the run up to COP26, the UK is working with every nation to implement the Paris Agreement on tackling climate change. Key goals are securing global net zero by 2050 and keeping temperature rises below 1.5 degrees. To deliver on these targets, countries will need to accelerate the phase-out of coal, curtail deforestation, speed up the switch to electric vehicles and encourage investment in renewables ("[Pick the planet](#)").
- Japanese Prime Minister Suga had declared that Japan will aim to realise a decarbonised society by reducing greenhouse gas emission to zero as a whole by 2050. Prime Minister Suga also stated that towards COP26, Japan intends to accelerate the "virtuous cycle of environment and growth" through innovation, and continue to lead the international community in order to realise the decarbonised society in line with the Paris Agreement.

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