

# Pope to call space station in papal first

April 22 2011

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Pope Benedict XVI delivers his blessing at the end of a Chrism Mass in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican, Thursday, April 21, 2011. The Chrism Mass marks the start of the Easter celebrations. (AP Photo/Andrew Medichini)

(AP) -- Pope Benedict XVI will be in satellite contact with two Italian astronauts aboard the International Space Station in what would be the first papal call to space.

The Vatican newspaper L'Osservatore Romano reported Friday that the hookup will happen on May 4 after shuttle Endeavour docks with the station. Liftoff is set for next Friday.

Two Italian [astronauts](#) will be meeting up on the space station. Roberto Vittori (vi-TORE'-ee) will be aboard the shuttle and Paolo Nespoli

(NES'-po-lee) is a space station resident.

Vittori will be carrying a silver medal donated by the pope. Others on the space station are Russian and American.

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Citation: Pope to call space station in papal first (2011, April 22) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-04-pope-space-station-papal.html>

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