

# The Pope's Trip To Colombia

## Eucharistic Site Spruces Up

By JAIME FONSECA  
(NC News Service)

**Bogota** — This city has been working feverishly to spruce itself up to serve as a dignified site for the 39th International Eucharistic Congress, to be held here Aug. 18-25.

While its two million inhabitants go about their daily business, they are constantly reminded of the August event by the feverish construction activity at key spots in town, and by the heavy road work crisscrossing an already congested city.

The work being done at the fastest pace is found along the avenues leading to El Sallitre, a vast area now turned into an impressive complex of housing units, radial roads, temporary buildings and, at the center, a majestic temple.

This is where the main events of the congress, to be attended by Pope Paul VI, will take place.

Some years ago the grounds were a cattle and produce farm, but the owners gave it to the town council to build hospitals, asylums and other institutions for the poor.

The site of the Eucharistic Congress has been completed after months of hurried labor. Close to the main "temple" (small temple), built like a rotunda with a high platform for the benefit of spectators in the grounds, is a large cross that can be seen from great distances, especially at night when it is flood lit. The center of the congress site is called La Plaza de la Cruz (the Plaza of the Cross).

Thirty-seven "sacramental plazas" fan out from the main altar in concentric arcs. These plazas are secondary sites for the celebration of Mass, for the distribution of Communion and for the hearing of confessions. Hundreds of priests and bishops are scheduled to concelebrate Mass with the Pope during the congress.

The organizers expect an estimated 600,000 communicants during the congress. With their 37 "sacramental plazas" they believe that each event can be conducted in an orderly, efficient manner.

Pilgrims trying to get a close view of the ceremonies at the Plaza de la Cruz will have to travel on foot a good mile from the outer limits of the site. Public buses and other vehicles will unload at the edge of the grounds and then proceed to large parking facilities nearby.

Pope Paul and other dignitaries, however, will reach the field by helicopter.

The organizing committee claims that about 750,000 persons — the full capacity of the grounds — can be moved in and out in about 90 minutes.

This problem does not worry the lucky 10,000 pilgrims who will be able to live at the nearby Vivendas del Papa Paulo, a housing project of 1,200 apartments and other facilities. These units will go to low-income families as tenants or mortgaged owners once the congress is over.

Bogota's Mayor Virgilio Barco has skillfully used the pressure of the forthcoming event, and the traditional pride of Bogotanos, to get funds, volunteers and all the cooperation he needs to complete new roads and repair or expand old ones, and to fix sidewalks, install public lighting and set up better transportation facilities.

Citing the need for more accommodations, he has also pushed other public works such as schools, neighborhood social centers and parks. Many of the evening events of the congress will take place in these neighborhood facilities.

All in all, more than 15,000 workers have been hired in the past few months, Bogota now has some 25 miles of better roads and many improved facilities for visitors and residents alike — as well as a debt of some \$3 million, which city authorities expect to recover in time for increased tourist trade and taxes.

All over town posters, signs and stickers proclaim the symbol of the congress: four fishes forming a cross in a circle. The letters CEI in big type also appear in shop windows, public places and lamp posts. They stand for Congreso Eucaristico Internacional (International Eucharistic Congress).

There has been a veritable flood of literature of all kinds to inform Colombians and their visitors of the aims and nature of the event, stressing three basic concepts: God, Man and the Community. The organizers have completed arrangements so that some 1,500 Colombian and foreign newsmen can cover the congress.

Hotels, inns and private homes are ready to take a flow of pilgrims that was estimated at 60,000 before the Pope announced he would come, and which is now estimated at over 100,000. Preparations have included distribution of "guest" sets: folding beds, chests, linen and other items.

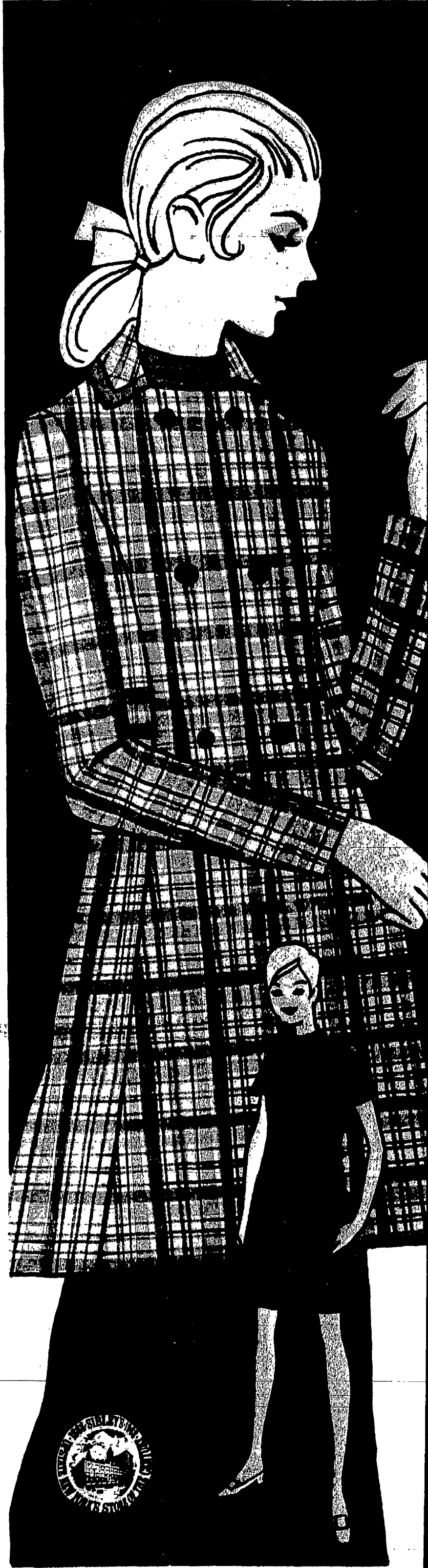
"Lost pilgrims" could be a problem also, and some 10,000 well-trained guides, all recognizable by their armbands, will fan out into five area airports, depots, downtown corners and at the congress grounds to greet and direct them. Hundreds of high school students are manning information booths. Police and national guard detachments have been similarly trained.

Health precautions have also been taken. Anyone entering Bogota will have to show a smallpox vaccination certificate. First aid and comfort stations are being set up at key points in the city and at the congress field.

Perhaps the most influential events will be held at the parish level, where Catholics will gather at neighborhood suppers and in the churches to commit themselves to a conscientious practice of the central belief of the faith: love of God and of neighbor. A total of 150 parishes have been participating in pre-congress services and lectures.

Perhaps the busiest and happiest of them all is St. Cecilia's parish in one of the poorer neighborhoods in Bogota. In its modest church Pope Paul will say Mass for the poor of Latin America on the morning of Aug. 24.

## plaid sets the fall fashion pace



And a snappy pace it is with a choice of our Mandarin collared coat costume with set-in sleeves, braid bound front panel and 1/2 belt back or the double-breasted charmer at right. The double-breasted costume has matching solid color short-sleeve dress and is available in brown and white plaid, \$75. The costume at left in grey and red plaid with short-sleeve solid color dress and leather belt, \$80. Both 100% wool. Sibley's Career Coats and Suits, Second Floor, Downtown only.

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## Special Purpose Ties Urged for Universities

**San Francisco** — (RNS) — Instead of long-term links such as federations or mergers, a leading Roman Catholic educator has urged universities and colleges to establish ties for special purposes.

Father John P. Whalen, acting rector of the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., suggested the formation of "coast-to-coast institutions" which could take a systematic interest in such national problems as urban and rural poverty, air and water pollution, and economic and political adjustment.

Using the sub-contracting method of industry, educational institutions could share their chance advantages of geography, Father Whalen told a Catholic University alumni fund-raising gathering here.

Father Whalen said that institutions could pool their resources, "no matter how separated geographically, without caring which institution finally gets credit for a study, and letting all the relevant data be considered before recommending federally assisted programs."

Father Whalen said that an evident need exists for an educational program which will take capable minds out of the rural and urban ghettos,

"train them in whatever they need to know to help solve the problems, and at whatever institution the knowledge is best to be found and return them as leaders of the War on Poverty and not as refugees from it."

"Our students," he continued, "interested in city, state and federal administration should spend at least a semester in local government. Students from universities throughout the country interested in local government should spend at least an equal time getting the federal feel of things . . . We must supply the mayors and governors with their dedicated professional administrators."

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