

PRESIDENT LEADS IRELAND'S HOLY YEAR PILGRIMS

A four-engined airliner brings to Ciampino airfield near Rome President Sean O'Kelly and his lady. Their arrival inaugurates the first Irish National Pilgrimage of the Holy Year. The President is the first head of a sovereign state to make the jubilee pilgrimage in his official capacity. Representatives of Church and State are there to welcome him.

The Presidential party makes the 10-mile journey into Rome along the Appian Way. Their temporary home is the lovely Villa Spada, where they are the guests of the Irish Ambassador to the Vatican. The day after his arrival sees the President leave by car for St. Peter's for an audience with the Pope.

Passing Garibaldi's statue on the Gianicolo, the President and Mrs. O'Kelly see the Eternal City at its best. Summer had come after weeks of autumn-like weather. Approaching St. Peter's, the President is met by the traditional Vatican ceremonial reserved for visiting Heads of State. A guard of honour, made up of the Palatine Guard and Vatican gendarmes, are drawn up for his inspection, as the Presidential cortege enters the precincts of St. Peter's.

Along the Noble Staircase, the Presidential party is conducted to the Papal apartment, where His Holiness receives them in private audience. Meanwhile, in St. Peter's Square, other pilgrims await their turn to pay their respects to the Holy Father.

The President, who told the Pope that he had come, as a pilgrim, to place his personal homage and that of the Irish people at the feet of the Holy Father, presented His Holiness with a chalice and, in turn, received a gold medal. Thus, with impressive ceremony, ends the President's first day of his jubilee Year Pilgrimage.