

'Death to Capital Punishment'

Stockholm (RNS) — A recent international conference here on the "Abolition of the Death Penalty," declaring that capital punishment is "the ultimate, cruel, inhuman, and degrading punishment and violates the right to life," has called for the universal "immediate and total abolition of the death penalty."

The conference, which drew more than 200 delegates and participants from Asia, Africa, Europe, the Middle East, North and South America and the Caribbean region, was sponsored by Amnesty International, the London-based, independent human rights organization.

The parley marked the launching by AI of a major campaign for the year 1978 aimed at wholesale abolition of the death penalty throughout the world.

AI, which works for the release of political prisoners around the world, provided they have not used or ad-

vocated violence, won the 1977 Nobel Peace Prize.

Its decision to campaign against the death penalty has been sharply criticized by some of its supporters in the struggle for freedom for political prisoners.

American columnist William F. Buckley Jr., scoring AI's decision, has announced his resignation.

A "declaration" issued by the Stockholm conference said that the death penalty is "frequently used as an instrument of repression against opposition, racial, ethnic, religious, and underprivileged groups," and "is increasingly taking the form of unexplained disappearances, extra-judicial executions, and political murders."

Affirming that executions "for the purpose of political coercion, whether by government agencies or others, are equally unacceptable," the conference declared its "total and unconditional opposition to the death penalty."

It called on "all governments to bring about the immediate and total abolition of the death penalty," and urged the

Vatican Lends Support To Chilean Church

Santiago (RNS) — A letter from the Vatican secretariat of state has been interpreted here as giving firm support to the Chilean Roman Catholic Church's ongoing criticism of the military government's "free market" economic policies.

The letter, written by the secretary of state, Cardinal Jean Villot, voiced "encouragement" for a Church-sponsored annual workshop on social problems in Chile.

The letter was described by a spokesman for the workshop, Social Week, as giving a stamp of Vatican approval to the Chilean and other Latin American Catholic Churches engaged in confrontation with the "doctrinaire" capitalist system "imposed upon their countries by military governments."

In his letter Cardinal Villot mentioned:

— The Church's concern

United Nations to declare that the death penalty is contrary to international law.

for people's daily subsistence needs, their living conditions, welfare and prosperity.

— The Church's need to share the lot of deprived people.

— The importance of helping people in need without discrimination of class, creed or opinion.

— The need to build an economy with a human objective that subordinates acquired private rights to the community's primary needs for an overall distribution of goods, so that society is not divided into a small privileged minority and a huge mass of people deprived of life's essentials.

— The recognition that an economy for man means production of goods to satisfy true human needs instead of artificial ones and mere consumerism.



Winter Dance

Mrs. John Connolly and Mrs. John O'Hara are handling invitations and reservations, respectively, for the Our Lady of Mercy High School Parent's Association Winter Snow Ball to be held Friday, January 13 at the Otto Shults Community Center on the Nazareth College campus. The evening will begin with a cocktail hour at 7:30, then dinner and dancing with the Dick Samson Band providing the entertainment.



The other night I was leafing through a magazine that had been sitting on the shelf for several months and discovered an article on "late bloomers."

The gist of the piece was that many people who have achieved success in their respective professions gave no indication as youngsters of the heights they were to reach.

Conversely, the youths who seemed to show the most promise early in life rarely managed to sustain the glow in later years.

The reasons given seemed logical: Those talented young people to whom things came easily as children and adolescents never developed the virtues of persistence, perseverance, doggedness. Then when they went out in the world and met others just as bright as they (for the world is full of intelligent people) they discovered they did not have the ability to struggle to keep on top of the heap.

The slow starters on the other hand had always had to plug away just to keep up. They developed traits that would stand them in good stead the rest of their lives.

For some it meant persevering to the very top, astounding relatives and friends who had never seen any particular luster heretofore in that direction.

William James, the 19th Century psychologist whose treatise on habits I have carried about for the past 10 years, folded in neat little squares in the secret wallet compartment in lieu of mad money, says somewhat the same thing.

James tells us that if we work steadily to the best of our abilities at whatever job

we choose we are to be assured that we will awaken one day to find ourselves one of the competent ones of our generation.

At the beginning of a new year these words are particularly comforting to those whose dreams still elude them.

There is yet time. As long as we live there is time. True we won't all achieve world acclaim for triumphs in the marketplace, in the arts, in science, in politics.

But there are personal and private successes whose rewards often are sweeter and more satisfying than the public ones. And each of us, thank God, has any number of chances to attain them.

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