IN MEMORIAM: DR. FRANCESC ABEL FABRE, S.J.

The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy has been impoverished by the loss of Dr. Francesc Abel Fabre, S.J. (1933–2011), one of the founders of bioethics and a long-time member of the Editorial Advisory Board.

2011 brought the death of Dr. Francesc Abel Fabre, S.J., at the age of 78. He was the pioneer of European bioethics. Dr. Abel learned the discipline at Georgetown University, working side by side with the founder and first director of the Kennedy Institute of Ethics, André Hellegers, as bioethics itself was coming into existence. He went from this experience to establish the Institute Borja of Bioethics in Catalonia in 1976, the first center of bioethics in Spain and in Europe. Through his scholarship and teaching, he established an influential dialogue in bioethics, as well as ethics committees in hospitals and in research centers. In 1986 he joined in founding the European Association of Centres of Medical Ethics, an organization in which he was involved and participated for the last 25 years. He contributed crucially to bioethics across the world, especially through the International Study Group on Bioethics (1980–1994). He was widely recognized as an outstanding bioethics expert in Latin America.

Francesc Abel worked very hard to spread bioethics as a methodology for addressing ethical problems in the clinic and for analyzing the central topics of bioethics – the beginning of life, the end of life, and biomedical research. His works were always developed from his deep Christian faith and with special open-minded thought. Moreover, his Institute has been a reference university center, teaching bioethics to health care professionals for the last 20 years.

His legacy will remain among us. After 35 years of work in bioethics, he has left a legacy in Catalonia, Spain, and Europe. The Institute Borja of Bioethics will keep his legacy alive, following in his unforgettable footsteps.

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