

Editorial

If you are reading this editorial it is because the world did not end in 2012, as widely trumpeted by the media throughout the year. Despite pessimistic predictions, we believe, effectively, that the opposite has occurred, at least in Brazil. We consider that the country entered a new era with regard to ethics in public life.

The trial of Criminal Case 470 at the Federal Supreme Court (STF) made universal the concept of justice, applying to the powerful, in an unprecedented manner in the country, the legal rigor that so far only reached the average citizen. By universalizing justice, making it not only the formal law, but – in fact – an instrument of social citizenship, the Brazilian public life can begin to be healed, emancipating itself from the colonial morality that for hundreds of years overwhelms the public interest to the dictates of institutional power. One may say, then, that this trial allowed Brazilians to perceive, more than two centuries later, the Kantian proposal to applied moral philosophy: *Act in such a way that the maximum of your action may become the principle of a universal legislation.*

The application of the categorical imperative to national public life is particularly relevant to those who study, think and work in bioethics, especially because this field is proposed to be about applied ethics. Therefore, the application of the categorical imperative in everyday life assumes that the action in personal and professional life is that which, by reflection, proves correct for all; whatever may incite our will, desires, vanity or greed.

We know, however, that acting according to this unconditional obligation of the categorical imperative is not always easy. But we also consider that it is not impossible, especially because we are endowed with a moral conscience. Each of us believes in the ethics which is intrinsic to the idea of human rights, and how we deal with bioethics, the principles of the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights, which urges us to realize the dignity not just in ourselves but in all mankind. If we are to make the principles of the Declaration real in our daily lives, we must begin by considering each person as an end, never merely as means to the attainment of our personal goals.

We hope that in 2013 the proposal to live under Kantian moral and ethical standards rooted in the justice that stems from conscience and reason (but without losing tenderness), becomes a priority target of public institutions in our country, and to our readers, may this option become an everyday achievement.

The editors

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