

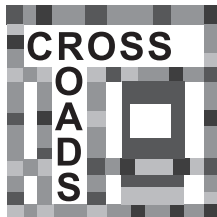
WHAT'S
FAITH
GOT TO DO
WITH IT?



FOUR LECTURES BY MONSIGNOR LORENZO ALBACETE



In Loving Memory of Our Chairman and Friend
Lorenzo Manuel Albacete Cintrón
1941-2014



Crossroads Cultural Center

Transcription: Rita Simmonds
Design and Layout: Deep River Media, LLC

©2015 Crossroads Cultural Center

TABLE OF CONTENTS



I. Faith and Politics: Do They Mix?	11
II. Faith and Science: Are They in Conflict?.....	23
III. Faith and Money: Do They Add Up?.....	37
IV. Faith and Romance: Are They a Good Match?.....	55

F O R W A R D

Robert Pollack*

When Lorenzo and I arranged to have these four lectures presented at Columbia in 2008, we both knew we were at once pushing open the gates of Columbia and also pushing the buttons of many within those gates. We were holding a public discussion of faith organized jointly by Communion and Liberation, the Catholic Chaplaincy of the University, and my own academic greenhouse, the Center for the Study of Science and Religion. Can you imagine?

Our intention was to bring a simple, clear religious message—at which we both had arrived by totally different paths—to four different audiences, each likely to be filled with young people waiting to have a good laugh at our silly, outmoded notions. The lectures were well-attended, and, as you will see, he and I did not entirely hide our collaborative scheme from the audience.

Lorenzo was able, by sheer force of his person, to bring these four different audiences from four different parts of the secular world to hear, see, and feel his radical and counterintuitive message. It was delivered each time in a two-step argument. First, that faith is the door to an enhanced reality, to a generosity and comfort that cannot be intellectually thought through, and to the gifts of wonder and of gratitude. Second, that faith cannot be felt without uncertainty, doubt, humility, and, above all, a willingness to admit that not everything is or ever will be knowable by anyone.

Come on! as he would say. *Unknowable? Give me a break.* Yet he was able to show, by example more than by argument, how a person can be more of a person—more just, more loving, more interesting, more lovable—once that person breaks the addictive mental habit of intellectual life, of measuring success by control, by encapsulation, by ownership, rather than by

* Robert Pollack is Professor of Biological Sciences at Columbia University, and co-author with the artist Amy Pollack of *The Course of Nature: A Book of Drawings on Natural Selection and Its Consequences*.

modesty, by humility, by not knowing everything.

When I go to pray, I join a large group of fellow congregants at Congregation B'nai Jeshurun in Manhattan. This is an old congregation, founded in 1825. Its name translates as “Children of the Upright.” And how do we Children of the Upright understand this gift of membership in such a family? On the wall facing east is a stained-glass window with a book open to one very short excerpt from the five books of Moses. In Hebrew it reads *tzedek tirdof*, which translates as “You shall pursue justice.” Deuteronomy 16:20 has it repeated: *tzedek tzedek tirdof*—part of a line that reads, “Justice, justice you will pursue, that you may live.”

Now comes the tip of the hat to Lorenzo: the word *tzedek* does mean justice, but it also means charity; when one gives a gift to a stranger, it is called *tzedaka*. So to close, it is never enough to be a person alone, no matter how strong. Only by sharing vulnerability can justice ever be reached in this world.