Tarnished Love...

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I'm not sure what happens to people when they reach a state of ideological certatude. When I sat down to blog this I was going to write "religious certatude," but that's really not broad enough. It appears that you can take any ideology, attach a significant lack of humility to it, and set people off into all sorts of tirades against the "unwashed" (who aren't people, after all, so what does it matter?).

Now, I don't happen to think ideology is a bad thing. The Apostolic Tradition to which I adhere, after all, is an ideology. I find nothing wrong with that, it gives me a community in which I can move and breath and live in relationship to a living Lord. The ideology of Orthodoxy sets boundary markers for me which I try not to cross but which, nevertheless, allow me to be in conversation with folks who don't share the same ideology. While I appreciate these people for simply being human beings created in the image of God, it must be said that it's the ideology of Orthodoxy that makes evangelism a real presence during these encounters. That's a good thing.

So, ideology isn't a bad thing - but if you take the humility away....look out!

Ideology without humility turns the boundary-markers into electric fences with large blinking signs on the inside that say, "Beware, non-humans beyond this point!" On the outside they say, "If you can find your way over there just might be hope for you." It's what I'm calling certatude that creates this ugly transformation.

Note, that I'm not talking about certainty. I'm certain that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior of all and that in the future is the resurrection of the dead. That certainty allows me to be in conversation with an older woman who is equally as certain in her belief about reincarnation (and tries to make me happy that she thinks I must've have been religious teacher in ancient Israel in a previous life). I love this woman, she's wonderful. She asks great questions - a member of our congregation has been friends with her for years and keeps trying to bring Jesus to her. If I didn't have certainty in my belief, and if I didn't know where my boundary-markers were, I wouldn't be in conversation with this woman. She would be threatening to me. Becuase I am certain, however, I can have the humility to stand in the presence of her certainty and be in conversation with her. That is a good thing.

That's what certatude can't bring people to.

Certatude is certainty gone bad. Certatude is the corruption of the Tradition. Certatude is a love of the community (and the source of a community) that has been tarnished and corrupted. Certatude can't abide being in contact with people of other ideologies. Certatude needs to make places "safe" for itself by making sure that other ideologies aren't allowed to exists freely without being made miserable. Certatude is what leads people to fly into buildings, invade countries on false pretenses, sling slurs against "non-humans" as if they didn't matter, and generally just makes people "pissy."

Certatude isn't a very nice thing.