

My journey into Orthodoxy has been marked by signposts all along the way. I was born into a Protestant family (Methodist, Southern Baptist, Episcopal). My mother taught me to read from the newspaper while my maternal grandmother taught me to read from the Bible. These two women were the first signposts leading to one of my early and lasting passions in life, obtaining information. As a teenager, I discovered the great Apologetics of the past and read myself back to the church of my fathers—the Anglo Catholic Episcopal Church.

As an adult, while working as a salesman for a furniture store, another signpost, a kindly Greek Orthodox priest, answered a mystery for me. While waiting on this priest, I asked him why the east and the west celebrate Easter on different Sundays. He smiled and said, “It is a bit complicated, but I will bring you an explanation soon.” The very next day, he presented me with a printed card explaining this mystery to me. I think this was the first time I questioned the western system.

My third signpost came to me when I was rehearsing for a role as an Orthodox priest in a production of The Good Doctor for a community theater group in the area. I wanted to look as genuinely Orthodox as possible to the audience. I knew there were differences between the western church and the Orthodox Church. The Orthodox do not cross themselves from left to right as the western church does. I wondered why. I found a local Eastern Orthodox Church in the yellow pages and phoned them. The priest’s wife answered. When I explained my problem to her, she answered all of my questions, and instructed me on how to position my fingers, cross myself in the correct way, and why it was done thusly. I was invited to attend their church and see for myself, but I never accepted the invitation.

When my Anglo Catholic beliefs began to suffer as the liberal wing of the Episcopal Church became the majority voice of what I considered the “third Catholic Church,” I returned to my first passion and began to read everything I found on Christian theologies. In what surprised me, I was soon reading and cross-referencing only Orthodox authors and ancient manuscripts. After reading, the Ladder of Divine Ascent and On the Corner of East and West, I knew it was time to visit an Orthodox parish. A year and a half later, my wife and I were Christmated (joining the church) and finally found a spiritual home.

Why am I Orthodox? My passion for information began my journey. Being similar to the Prodigal son, God has gently and firmly guided me to where I could best love and serve Him. Secondly, there were the friendly loving and kind people from the Greek priest, to all of the wonderful priests and church members I now call my brothers and sisters, guiding me all along the path (like signposts) to the end of my journey.