

Recently in the last several years Orthodoxy has seen a surge of young men and women seeking to discover the beauty of our Orthodox faith. Here in our own parish we have had many young people complete catechism and join our parish and our community.

This is very exciting not only for the converts joining our church but also energizes our parish members to see this strong vitality and interest in our faith.

Orthobro is a slang term that has recently entered into the American lingo particularly from social media outlets. Generally, this term applies to young men seeking a more traditional and rigorous approach to faith and spirituality.

While the impact of social media has been a valuable tool to help those seeking out Orthodoxy this has come at a cost which we must all be aware of. The Orthobro movement reflects characteristics which include:

- Prioritizing online engagement and debate over real-life participation in church and faith.
- Displays harshly critical engagement towards individuals of different faiths and denying the legitimacy of other Christian denominations.
- Attaches political ideology to religious practices and teachings.

Certainly on-line debate is the first step for those curious about Orthodoxy, however debates display these types of characteristics, those seeking to discover the true essence Orthodoxy, instead are overwhelmed by intense discussions about dogma and doctrine neglecting what is fundamentally beautiful about Orthodoxy; its devotion to engage on a personal level with each person seeking to develop and encourage a more intimate relationship with our Savior Jesus Christ.

As we read the sermons and writings of the Holy Fathers we clearly see their deep love and knowledge of our faith but we can also sense their devotion, compassion, and love for both those weak in faith as well as the strong in faith.

Our theological school of Holy Cross in Boston, instills in future clergy the idea that we learn Orthodox dogma and doctrine not to use it as a weapon against other faiths, but as knowledge, in obedience to the Holy Spirit, to allow both priests and laity to engage people at whatever level of spirituality they are.

One of the dangers of the Orthobro movement is that, without the guidance of a compassionate and elder spiritual father, these young influencers fall victim to pride, creating an environment that stresses dogmatic adherence without compassionate application. And this gives to those curious about the impression that the Orthodox faith values doctrine or individual personal relationships.

As I've said many times on my Orthodoxy Q&A, on-line is a starting place but in no way can be considered complete in of itself. To be truly Orthodox, one must have a personal (flesh and blood) relationship with a priest and the parish community.

See also the article ["From 'Orthobro' to Orthodox and the Danger of Jay Dyer's church within the Church."](#)