



*fully human*  
the special call of special needs

By many accounts, St. Sergius struggled with traditional learning as a child. His teachers and parents lost patience with him when he seemed unable to pay attention to school work. He did not read and write at an age appropriate level. This pained him specifically because he wanted to read Holy Scripture. He prayed fervently that he be granted this ability. A miraculous encounter with a mysterious monk and a prayer service in the church answered that prayer. He read Holy Scriptures at the monk's command, and put this new talent to good use for the rest of his life.

There may be some people who are likewise granted abilities in supernatural ways. For most, cognitive skill acquisition comes after combined prayer, effort, and a variety of learning strategies; for still others, reading may never be an acquired skill. The lesson from St. Sergius' life that may comfort those with cognitive disabilities and their families is this: God always grants requests that lead to a person's salvation. To persons who cannot read Holy Scripture, the Lord will communicate in ways she or he is able to receive. God's love and favor are not limited by a person's mental capacity, but by one's unwillingness to accept His grace.