



fully human the special call of special needs

Saint John Maximovitch of San Francisco had a severe speech impediment. He worked hard at improving his speech, and secured the services of a voice therapist. Parishioners often did not understand his slurred words in his sermons. Nevertheless, a glowing light was seen and photographed emanating from his person as he preached the gospel.

Whether special needs are verbal, physical, emotional, and/or cognitive, discerning what tools and therapies might be helpful can become overwhelming at times. St. John can be a model for us because he partook of both the “earthly” and “spiritual” tools God offered him. He gained skill through the discipline of speech therapy. He prayed, fasted, and gave alms to a heroic degree, and was said to never miss a day consuming the Heavenly Medicine of Holy Communion. Through God’s grace and his humble efforts, he shone God’s glory and imparted to his flock “the peace of God which surpasses all understanding.”(Phil 4:7)