

**Are we “All In,” Like the Widow Who Gave Everything?  
A gospel reflection from Brian Wigger, Pastoral Associate**

I know lots of adults who make sure they buy enough candy (that they like) so they have some left when the trick or treaters have stopped ringing the doorbell Halloween night. We all have our own ways of keeping a little something back for ourselves. We don't want to give it all away. We can't all be like this noble widow giving away her last bit of cash with nothing left in her ATM. She's all in. And if I'm honest with myself, I admit that, with regard to my discipleship, I'm almost all in.

If you have noticed, over the past several weeks, the Gospel from Mark has featured varying levels of commitment or lack thereof. In response to Jesus' ministry, some people were all in, some were all out, and others were almost all in.

Last week the rich man went away sad for he had many possessions. He was all out.

In the Gospel a few weeks ago, James and John are willing to be all in if Jesus will promote them to the corner office. They're all in if their conditions are met.

Last week, Bartimaeus, like our poor widow, is all in. Had I been playing his role I would have draped my cloak over my arm and taken it with me as I felt my way toward Jesus through the crowd, just incase Jesus couldn't heal me, I'd have a fallback plan. I'd have my money, my shelter, my bed—all of which the first-century beggar's cloak represented.

In playing the role of the poor widow, many would have put in one coin and kept the other. But that's not how she does things. We will see how Jesus denounces scribes who are all about their own prestige and wealth. Then, by contrast, he praises the widow who gives to the max. She is all in.

Notice too, the scribe in the passage is on the brink of being all in. Jesus tells him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God". All it will take for him to enter is to love the Lord with all his heart, all his soul, all his mind, all his strength and to love his neighbor as himself. The word "all" appears a lot in our short Gospel.

Apparently, all it will take is all he's got!

The point I think Jesus is showing is that the poor widow who offers her whole living to God contrasts markedly with the hypocritical and avaricious leaders of Judaism, and affords a superb example of complete loyalty and devotion to God's call.

I'm going to need to rethink my candy strategy next year. And my discipleship as well.