



Penn State: A Lesson to Remember

The recent news coming from Penn State is not about the downfall of a coaching icon. It's not about a Saturday afternoon football game. It's not a sex scandal. It is a story about serial rape of children and a conspiracy to cover it up.

This story is about the devastating harm of rape perpetrated against children by a man in a position of authority who posed as a helper. Former Penn State coach Jerry Sandusky perpetrated these rapes against real children who were harmed – physically, emotionally, spiritually – by the abuse. These harms last a lifetime.

This story is about witnesses. Adult witnesses saw Sandusky raping the children in the shower room. And these witnesses walked on. They did not rush in to help. They did not cry out. They did not call 911. They kept walking while Sandusky continued to rape children.

This story is about cover up. The witnesses told “authorities” at Penn State. These “authorities” did not call 911. They did not call the police. They let Sandusky continue to rape children.

This story is about the failure of the criminal justice system to recognize an emergency. Sandusky raped children on a regular basis and no one stopped it.

We do not know how many children were abused, and we never will. But we do know Sandusky had help in covering up his crimes. Just like the Catholic Bishops protecting the Catholic Church instead of children, Penn State and local authorities sacrificed children to protect the school, its football program and the money that program generates.

Those who don't remember history are doomed to repeat it. Right now our nation's memory on sexual abuse isn't very good. That must change. We must force the change we want to have. We must do it for victims past and present. Let us not repeat this story. Let it end here.

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