The Assessment Of Father Joe’s Personality

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Father Joe helped Hendra in the conflicting situation that transformed his life. The role of Father Joe was more of a friend and confessor than the conservative monks of Catholic elementary school. Father Joe derived his ideas from a deep reservoir of ancient and medieval Christian spirituality and offered relevantly profoundly pastoral guidance to Tony Hendra. Tony Hendra suffered a conflicting situation due to a clash between spiritual desire and secular modernity. Father Joe’s friendship helped Hendra explore the unique characteristics that turned him into a better human. The qualities that Hendra developed from Father Joe’s friendship include perseverance, honesty, self-knowledge, strength, encouragement, support, and fidelity. Though Father Joe was a monk of the Benedictine Abbey of Quarr, Hendra found his methods moderate, which distinguished him from other monks (Hendra 2004).

Julian of Norwich and Pastoral Love

The character of Father Joe resembles the Julian of Norwich known as an effective Christian theologian. Julian of Norwich inspired Christians and humans towards a sensitive pastoral approach that reflects the character of Father Joe. The pastoral teaching of Julian connects her with compassion, love, and positivism. The teachings of Julian promote love and lack the element of extremism or violence. She stressed the importance of love and stated, “God wants us to consider and enjoy love in everything, and this is the knowledge of which we are most ignorant, for some of us believe that God is almighty and has the power to do everything, and he is all wisdom and knows how to do everything.” The relationship of Father with Hendra is a depiction of the same pastoral approach promoted by Julian of Norwich. Father Joe promoted positive qualities among Hendra and related humans with affirmation, love, affection, consolation, and support.

Affection Instead of Punishment

The primary difference in Father Joe’s approach that separated him from other monks was his adoption of affectionate methods against the conservative and strict punishments of Catholic schools. Only through Father Joe Hendra were they able to explore God’s love: “All my conscious life was my strongest ally.” Hendra states, “the cherished gatekeeper of my lost Eden, a lighthouse of faith blinking away through the oceanic fogs of success and money and celebrity and possessions, my intrepid guide in the tangled forest of human love, my silken lifeline to the divine, my Father Joe” (Hendra 4-5). The story of friendship between a Benedict monk and Hendra points out Augustine and

Julian of Norwich. Augustine explored earlier the need and significance of friendship. He identified the impossibility of human living with holiness and goodness alone. His teachings point to the dependence of happiness on friendship and companionship. Friends that help to identify goodness and positivity result in the development of people. Hendra's passion and hope, irrespective of all the failures and complexities of life, was the result of Father Joe's guidance and support. Love and affection remain prominent elements of Father Joe's teachings that encouraged Hendra to see the light and overcome disappointment.

Augustine on Happiness and Eternal Love

The character analysis of Father Joe relates him to Augustine as his teachings reflect the same gentleness and affection. Augustine taught about true happiness and assessed the nature of human beings. He guided people to spread love and happiness and denied the relationship of wealth or power with happiness. Augustine's thoughts reflect that people are not able to achieve satisfaction through materialism, but they attain happiness through selflessness and affection. Augustine explains love is free from selfishness and emphasizes the purity of love. He classified love into two categories that comprise material love and eternal love, and recognized the latter one as pure love. The character of Father Joe relegates to Augustine as his teaching used the same approach that helped Hendra to attain spirituality.

Confession Sin and Redemption

The spirituality of Father Joe also links to eternal love that leads to greater pleasure and comfort. The most striking resemblance between Father Joe and Augustine is 'confession.' Augustine confessed his sins to demonstrate no man is free from sins. Augustine's theological autobiography on confession presents his reflection on human faults. His confession leads to complex interpretation as he recounts his conquest from sinfulness to faithfulness. He associates the wrongness of human nature with the greatness of God and believes that God forgives the sinner. The reason for a human to return to rightness is God's greatness as he accepts the sinful. The confession of Augustine is an illustration of redemption as he recognizes the reason for his redemption is God. God holds power and greatness to save man from sins. Augustine's confession is devoted to his mother's death, and the latest versions are a contribution to theology and philosophy in pure forms. Two prominent elements of Augustine's confession include sin and redemption.

Human Imperfection Time and Return to God

Redemption is a depiction of the human imperfections that are distracted due to worldly temptations and returns to the creator. Redemption also reflects the conversion of the transformation of Augustine from sinful to faithful. The emphasis of Augustine in his confession is that if a man strays, God allows

him to return to the right. Augustine accepts that man is capable of committing sin to achieve his worldly desires. The deeper message conveyed is that imperfectly created humans are returned to God. Confession illustrates that a human attains perfection through their relationship with God. Augustine relates the creation of eternal God with the temporal creation of man. Though man returns to God, the process takes time. Humans are aware of God's existence but only learn through personal experience. The solution that Augustine presented involves a thorough understanding attained simultaneously through eternity and time. The human distraction and his distance from God cause him to fall for a time. Augustine identified time as an illusion to test human beings, and the falling of humans into such a trap is natural.

A Confessor Who Defied Expectations

The relevance of Father Joe's teachings with Augustine reflects from his act of opening his story to Hendra in the same way as Augustine opened himself to his readers. The illustration of Augustine's salvation to God reflects his unification of time under unchanging God. Father Joe influenced the life of Hendra through his effective teaching and guidance. Hendra explored his first affair at 14 years of age with a married woman. When the husband of the woman finds Hendra with his wife, he sends him to the Benedict Abbey under the supervision of Father Joe. Hendra finds things different at the Abbey than his expectations due to the different roles of father Joe. The perceptions of Hendra about church and Father were proved wrong when he found him different from his prior knowledge of monks. He expected harsh and strict treatment at the Abbey, but he revealed things were different. Hendra finds Father Joe different, open, and thoughtful; he acts as a confessor and helps Hendra identify his real goals.

Guidance Through Failure and Self-Hatred

The open nature of Father had a great impact on Hendra's life and resulted in positive changes. Hendra revealed the grace of Father Joe in his friendship and support. Hendra's decision to choose a monastic life was under the guidance of Joe, and he pursued comedy, which made him a writer at the National Lampoon. Hendra's decisions related to his life have a strong influence on Father Joe. Hendra went through different phases of life, as the failure of his first marriage resulted in self-hatred. He suffered the complexities of searching for the real meaning of life as his life appeared to be useless. Only through Father Joe Hendra was able to view positivism and start his normal life.

Youthful Understanding in Old Age

The close assessment of Father Joe's teaching style depicts his relevance with the great religious people Augustine and Julian of Norwich. Father Joe was almost seventy. "He did appear to perceive things as a young man might, to be seeing, hearing, thinking things for the first time" (Hendra 34).

One effective feature of his personality was his ability to understand the younger generation irrespective of his old age. His views appeared to be younger than his age, which helped him to develop effective interaction with young people like Hendra. “The ‘he’ of his God was gentle, generous, endlessly creative musical, artistic, and engineer and architect of genius, a ‘he’ who felt his joy and your joy deeply but would never give up on you” (Hendra 35).

Gentleness as a Healing Power

The personality of Father Joe reflects the power of charm that he holds to convince any person in a gentle and soft manner. He acted more like a human than a monk, and the element of pride was missing from his personality. The emotional ability of Father Joe was no different from normal humans, which allowed him to feel other people and their feelings. Another element that presents Father Joe’s loving nature is his ability to console people and never let them give up. He, through his effective counseling, helped others to search for hope and see the light. His words act like healing power due to the elements of gentleness and generosity. The softness of his tone generates melodious effects on the ears of the listener and conveys the message in the most effective manner. The close analysis of Father Joe’s personality depicts that he was a love who used affection as a tool to cure people and give them strength to return to the right path.

Religion as Active Guidance

Father Joe was not like conservative old monks: “Good gracious, dear. We are not silly old monks, mumbling prayers all day long. We’ve got a job to do” (Hendra 41). Father Joe accepted his role as a guide and teacher, and his religion was not only confined to his prayers and worship. He separated himself from the conservativeness of old monks who presented themselves as refined creatures who were more pious and holy. They prefer to spend most of their time on prayers and give strict advice to humanity. Father Joe had a different role, and he recognized his duty as guiding people and helping them to make better choices in life. The dialogue of Father Joe with Hendra depicts his generosity and humbleness as he does not use his holiness or piety to convince people. He presented himself as a normal being like all other human beings and did not consider himself superior on behalf of his holy status.

The Job of Unreserved Love

“He had built it up, fed it to the brim over decades of contemplating people, and whatever their defects or defenses or eccentricities, however, unappetizing they might be personally or morally, loving them without reserve. His gentle power sprang from a straightforward assessment of the world and his job in it. The job was love” (Hendra 41). Father Joe was more involved in helping people and contemplating them than telling people about their faults. He tried to help people to recognize the

good in them through his generosity and love. The role of Father Joe was not limited to worship but wanted to communicate with people and tell them the reality of the world and God. The same element of love is reflected in the teachings of Julian of Norwich, who worked for the betterment of humanity. Julian and Father Joe resemble each other in spreading love and handling people with care.

Leniency Against Fear and Hopelessness

One reason that connects Father Joe and Julian is their assessment of human nature as they realize harshness turns people into hopelessness and self-hatred. The goal of both characters was to allow people to find their true sense and give up on the things that make them depressed and unhappy. Happiness was the greater message that was reflected in the personalities of Father Joe and Julian as they related themselves to actions that could help humanity seek pleasure. The adoption of a lenient approach is a necessary part of the pastoral teachings of Julian and the actions of Father Joe. Father Joe, like Julian, realized the implications of the old Christian methods adopted by monks to address people. People, when learning about the punishments for their wrong actions, are intimidated which prevents them from choosing right. Father Joe and Julian focused more on the generosity and love of God that helped them to transform people and improve their belief in God and faith.

God’s Greatness and the Possibility of Forgiveness

Father Joe and Augustine adopted one common method to guide the strayed and confused, which is through promoting the greatness of God. Both characters did not deny the fact of human falling into time and accepted the possibilities of temporary distractions. The teaching style of Father Joe, like Augustine, lacked any element of force or harness that convinced people more. The purpose of their teachings was to show the direction to humans and allow them to return to God. Augustine accepted his sins openly to convince people about the possibility of forgiveness. Father Joe and Augustine show a positive side to people by relating their imperfections with the greatness of God. The message is clear in the teachings of both personalities that humans commit sin because God is ready to forgive them.

Peace Through Love and Companionship

“Peace is love, dear, and love peace. Peace is the certainty that you are never alone” (Hendra 50). Father Joe related to love with peace and companionship. His teachings reflect that peace is not achievable with loneliness. His views reflect that the only way to attain peace is through love and companionship. Julian also related peace with love, and her teachings reflect that peace remains inseparable from love.

Loneliness as the True Hell

“God gave you a great gift that terrible night, Tony dear. He gave you a vision of hell. It’s not that silly fire and brimstone stuff. True hell. Being alone with yourself for all eternity. Only your own self to hope in and your own- self to love” (Hendra 50). The guidance of Father Joe emphasized friendship as he associated the condition of loneliness with hell and unhappiness. The purpose of Father Joe and Julian is to promote love through friendship, and they taught people the significance of companionship.

Friendship Joy and Human Well-Being

Father Joe is a demonstration of friendship as he acts as a close friend and listener. Julian, in a similar manner, portrayed the significance of love and recognized it as the purpose of human existence. The pastoral teachings of Julian depict that the greater way of pleasing God is to live happily through his knowledge of love. Father Joe and Julian link the wellness of human beings with love and affection. Julian associated the unhappiness of humans with their darkness to recognize happiness. Julian identifies that unawareness and blindness to nature’s wisdom result in dissatisfaction. Father Joe also encouraged searching for happiness through love. Julian relates loneliness and suffering with the evil that also reflects from Father Joe’s explanation of loneliness and Hell. Julian associates love with joy: “Pay attention to this now, faithfully and confidently, and at the end of time, you will truly see it in the fullness of joy” (Albert 273).

Acceptance of Every Human Being

The most impressive part of Father Joe’s personality was his acceptance of humans in any form, as he did not express any dislike toward the people. “But you must remember: military men too are children of God, loved by God, candidates of salvation. Even mass murderers, if they want forgiveness and reach out of it, can be forgiven” (Herald 57). Father Joe, like Augustine, does not deny forgiveness to the evil human as well. Both reflect through their teachings the love of God that illustrates that forgiveness is for all bad and good because God loves humans. The teaching style of both characters displays the promotion of positive aesthetics that provoke the sinful and wrong to give up on bad things and choose the right path. Views of Father Joe associated him with Augustine, and one common point of connection between them is the importance of human beings. Neither one considered any human-less important by their deeds to nature. “We are nothing, are we, dear, compared to the perfection of what comes next? Death makes the failure of us all” (Hendra 122). The views of Father Joe about imperfection connect him to Augustine, who has the same view as he mentions: ‘One yearns to return to God.’

Language of Tenderness and Spiritual Direction

The linguistic radar of Father Joe made him a more appealing human as dominant traits of his language include love, tenderness, affection, and gentleness. The personality and views of Father Joe connected him to the two philosophers, Augustine and Julian of Norwich. The common element prevalent in the three is the goal to encourage human beings towards faith and love. Only through guidance and effective teaching can people explore the world and the associated wisdom. Father Joe helped Hendra to identify his real self and sort out the conflict that he encountered between the material and spiritual world. Character analysis of Father Joe separated him from conservative monks who emphasized more on the faults of humans and associated punishments, while Father Joe adopted a neutral approach and focused more on the rightness of humans. The teaching style of Father Joe links him to Julian of Norwich due to as his approach resembles her pastoral aspects. Julian nurtured love in people through her message of affection and human bonding.

The Mentor Who Led Hendra Back to Light

Father Joe elevated love and companionship that displays him as a neutral and devoted teacher. Father Joe and Julian supported their views on human betterment, which is only possible through unselfishness and devotion. The role of Father Joe also binds him with the great thinker and philosopher Augustine due to the similarity in views. The most common element that chains Father Joe and Augustine are the acceptance of humans in any form. Father Joe lacked elements of hatred, dislike, abhorrence and rejection toward people. Their personality or deeds did not influence his attitude towards people. He displayed himself as a listener, friend, mentor, guide, and teacher for the good and bad. The neutral views of Father Joe related him to Augustine as both offered guidance that helped the strayed and aimless. The teachings of Father Joe helped Hendra to find light and brought him out of the darkness in the same way as Augustine helped the sinful to return to the right path. The assessment of Father Joe's personality depicts that Hendra was able to change himself only through the effective pastoral guidance of Father Joe, which contained elements of Julian and Augustine's teachings. Father Joe made the life of Hendra easy, which helped him to reveal tranquility, peace, and happiness through recognition of his goals.

Bibliography

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