

YOU WERE ASKING . . . by Msgr. Pat Stilla

Q. For months now, most media interviews have been about the current pandemic or, more recently, about the lifting of lockdown measures on essential services. What I find troubling is that most persons who are interviewed, never even mention religion or religious services of any denomination as being essential. Are not Religious celebrations essential services, too?

A. Of course they are essential for you, for me and for all persons of Faith and should be essential for everyone. However, as we know, many in our current secularized society do not even consider Religion to be needed at all, much

less be essential! Regretfully, for some, it doesn't even come to mind. In many media interviews that I have heard, this seems to be the mind set or attitude not only of the persons who are being interviewed but also of the interviewers themselves, who sometimes seem to steer their answers in a particular "agnostic" direction.

Which Services are essential? This is one of those questions

that is almost never answered objectively by anyone. As I mentioned above, for us and for many of our parishioners, the re-opening of our Church-es is much more essential

than the lifting of restrictions on bars and swimming pools. However, for the person who enjoys socializing with friends at a bar or who best relaxes in a public pool, these services are much more essential, as are football or soccer matches for the sports fan and a barber's availability for the one with the shaggy head of hair. History should be our teacher!

Many may be tempted to conclude that this kind of secularized attitude towards Faith is terribly

catastrophic and definitely the product of modern times. I suppose some of this is true, but I would suggest that it is not entirely true, nor will it bring about an eventual end of Faith in our world as some may fear. After all, if we examine

the world's history, we will discover very quickly that this kind of secularization has actually existed from the beginning of creation and continues to show itself from time to time in many different societies. After all, I'm sure that for Nero Caesar in 65 A.D or for Attila the Hun in the 5th century or even for Napoleon, Stalin or Hitler in more recent times, religious belief or practice were certainly not at

the top of their list of essentials. Instead, for them and for so many others then and now, the important things in life were the consolidation of power and the attainment

of prestige, popularity, wealth and personal pleasure. Not only was Faith not a priority for them but it was primarily a reality that they felt compelled to destroy and some came pretty close to reaching that sinister goal. However, Divine Providence did not and never will allow this to happen. After all, they are all gone and Faith is still with us! Finally, it is clear that despite the fact that we decry religious apathy today, this too will pass, along with the pandemic!

