

QC bans public gatherings during feasts

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In anticipation of upcoming feasts, religious events and cultural festivals, Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte has banned public gatherings and other community celebrations to prevent the transmission of COVID-19.

“Several Quezon City barangays traditionally celebrate fiestas and other festivals this month and in the coming months. Unless regulated, these celebrations could lead to mass gatherings and encourage the spread of the virus,” Belmonte said. “Let us sacrifice our customs during these celebrations for our own safety.”

In a memorandum, Belmonte banned processions and parades such as Santacruzán as well as fairs, carnivals, variety shows, fireworks displays, *ati-atihan* and other public performances.

Public games and contests such as pageants, singing competition and bingo were also prohibited.

Belmonte also barred the holding of group contact sports such as basketball as well as *boodle fights* and drinking in public.

“Residents may only drink at home or inside restaurants or establishments, subject to health protocols,” she said.

Also banned are group *videoke* and other gatherings that violate social distancing measures.

Belmonte said modest celebrations at home, among immediate family members or close acquaintances, will be allowed subject to health protocols.

Masses and other religious activities for the purpose of blessing a building or establishment may continue, subject to strict safety guidelines such as the wearing of face masks and shields.

Celebrations conducted primarily for an online audience, with limited physical attendance are also allowed.

Belmonte said the conduct of dragon dance or lion dance for the Chinese New Year would be allowed provided that the same will be held in a designated area, with the audience seated and socially distanced while wearing face masks and shields.

The city’s law and order cluster, regulatory departments, barangays and the Quezon City Police District were directed to strictly enforce the order.