

## QC locks down 4 religious facilities

Philippine Daily Inquirer · 22 Sep 2021 · A4 · By Mariejo S. Ramos and Patricia Denise M. Chiu @Team\_Inquirer

Four religious compounds in Quezon City have been placed under “special concern lockdown” due to recent COVID-19 outbreaks, with a priest succumbing to the disease. The Quezon City government on Tuesday identified the facilities as the Christ the King Mission Seminary, the Convent of the Holy Spirit, the Religious of the Virgin Mary Convent (RVMC) and the Stella Maris Convent.

In Christ the King, 25 of the facility’s 59 residents tested positive for the virus, with 11 recoveries as of Sept. 18, according to the city’s epidemiology and disease surveillance unit. The total cases included nine priests and 16 employees.

The city government said a priest, who was one of two index cases that were recorded in the seminary on Sept. 3, died of COVID-19.

Two buildings in the seminary, Villa Cristo Rey and Fininman, were locked down on Sept. 18.

City health officials said none of the nuns at RVMC, where 50 staff members and 64 sisters tested positive for COVID-19, were vaccinated because they had their schedule canceled. The staff were fully vaccinated.

The Quezon City government said it was now crafting guidelines on ventilation in buildings and workplaces, including long-term care facilities, to prevent COVID-19 outbreaks. The guidelines were being prepared by the city architect with the building official and engineering departments, according to the city government.

### Series of outbreaks

“We will send these guidelines to building administrators in the city so they will learn how to better retrofit their facilities and make these more resistant to virus transmission,” Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte said.

Within two weeks, the city government grappled with clustering of infections in closed facilities, including two convents where 136 individuals tested positive for the virus.

RVMC was locked down on Sept. 14, and the Convent of the Holy Spirit on Sept. 15.

The outbreaks in these convents were preceded by the reported infections among 143 individuals in an orphanage in Barangay Bagumbuhay.

The city government reported that all of the 122 COVID-19 patients, including 99 children, at the Gentle Hands Orphanage were asymptomatic or have recovered from the virus as of Monday.

Belmonte had earlier directed the city’s Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance Unit to make an inventory of all closed-setting facilities in the city, including convents, nursing homes, homes for the aged and rehabilitation centers.

### New cases

Meantime, the Department of Health (DOH) on Tuesday said it logged 16,631 new COVID-19 infections, bringing the country’s total case count to 2,401,916 cases. Tuesday’s case tally was the lowest since Sept. 1, when there were 14,216 cases recorded.

However, in its daily case bulletin, the DOH said the lower-than-usual case tally was due to the fewer laboratory output last Sunday, adding that cases might still rise in the coming days.

The same case bulletin showed that there were now 171,142 active cases or currently sick individuals, of which 92.4 percent were mild cases, 2.8 percent asymptomatic, 0.6 percent in critical condition, 1.4 percent severe cases and 2.69 percent moderate cases.

The positivity rate also remained high at 27 percent. This means that of the 48,262 tested on Sunday, more than one in four tested positive for the virus.

The DOH also said another 21,974 have recovered from the illness, which brought the total number of recoveries to 2,193,700. However, another 140 also died, bringing the death toll to 37,074.

The health department added that 78 percent of all beds in the intensive care units and 73 percent of all COVID-19 ward beds were occupied, while 67 percent of all isolation beds and 58 percent of all mechanical ventilators were in use.

Four laboratories were not able to submit their data on time, while 61 duplicate cases were removed from the total case count, the DOH said. Another 60 cases previously tagged as recoveries were reclassified as deaths following final validation.