

Republic of the Philippines  
**House of Representatives**  
Quezon City

**SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS**  
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8812



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**INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE ALFRED VARGAS**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

This bill seeks to declare January 9 of every year a Special Nonworking Holiday to commemorate the Feast of the Black Nazarene.

The Philippines is the third largest Catholic country in the world. There are about 90 million Catholic Filipinos or 86 percent of the whole population, thus, the prominence of Catholic traditions and occasions in our nation.

For more than 400 years, the historical statue of a dark-skinned Jesus Christ kneeling, and carrying his cross has become a symbol of devotion, struggle, faith and resilience for Filipino Catholics.

The iconic statue, which is currently enshrined in the Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene or more famously known as the Quiapo Church, has survived the raging fires that devastated the church twice, two earthquakes, the floods of numerous typhoons and even bombings during the Second World War. A feat exceeded only by the Filipino people's own resilience and strength in the face of innumerable challenges.

On January 9 of every year, an estimated 18 million Filipinos from all around the country take part in the celebration of the Feast of the Black Nazarene. This feast is one of the biggest religious celebrations in the Philippines. In fact, few religious celebrations anywhere in the world can match this feast in terms of the number of devotees who participate and the passion which these devotees exhibit during this sacred occasion.

Principally, devotees take part in an extraordinary procession popularly known as *Traslacion* during which devotees carry a replica of the iconic statue in a display of extreme religious devotion. This iconic religious procession does not happen in Manila alone but is also conducted in different

locations nationwide such as in Cagayan de Oro, Samar and other provinces which feature their own version of the kneeling mulatto Nazarene.

In light of the importance of this occasion to many of our countrymen, it is imperative that January 9 of every year be declared as a special nonworking holiday to commemorate the Feast of the Black Nazarene.

Furthermore, given the immense number of people involved in the celebration of this feast, and in view of the paramount importance of maintaining peace and order, and of securing the safety of participants and the public in general, there is a necessity to institutionalize the coordination of different government agencies and instrumentalities to ensure smooth coordination between public and private sectors, and the extension of necessary assistance in connection to the celebration of the Feast of the Black Nazarene.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.

  
**ALFRED VARGAS**

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**AN ACT**

**DECLARING JANUARY 9 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL NONWORKING HOLIDAY IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY TO COMMEMORATE THE FEAST OF THE BLACK NAZARENE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled.*

**Section 1.** January 9 of every year is hereby declared a special nonworking holiday in the entire country to commemorate the Feast of the Black Nazarene and to allow all devotees to participate in the said religious event.

**Sec 2. Assistance to the Conduct of Cultural and Historical Events in connection with the Feast of the Black Nazarene.** To ensure smooth coordination between the public sectors, maintain peace and order, and ensure the safety of the participants and the public in general, the following national government agencies and instrumentalities are enjoined to extend the necessary assistance, consistent with their respective mandates, in connection with the conduct of cultural and historical events such as the *Traslacion* and other activities in relation to the celebration of the Feast of the Black Nazarene:

- a. Department of National Defense;
- b. Department of Interior and Local Government;
- c. Department of Social Welfare and Development;
- d. Department of Health;
- e. Philippine National Police;
- f. Philippine Coastguard;

- g. Bureau of Fire Protection;
- h. National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council;
- i. National Telecommunications Commission;
- j. Department of Tourism; and
- k. National Parks Development Committee.

Local Government Units (LGUs) where there is an image of the Black Nazarene and celebrates the same feast, such as, but not limited to, Cagayan De Oro, Davao del Norte, Zamboanga Sibugay, Zamboanga City, Zamboanga del Norte, Iligan, Eastern Samar, Western Samar, Nueva Ecija, Nueva Vizcaya, Batanes, among other localities are likewise enjoined to extend the necessary assistance relative to the conduct of the aforementioned cultural and historical events.

**Sec. 3. Assistance from Other Concerned Agencies and Private Sector.** All other concerned government agencies and the private sector are hereby encouraged to provide assistance to the concerned agencies and LGUs in the effective implementation of this law.

**Sec. 4. Repealing Clause.** - All laws, presidential decrees, orders, issuances, rules and regulation and any part thereof inconsistent, which are inconsistent with the provisions of the Act are hereby amended or modified accordingly.

**Sec. 5. Separability Clause.** - If any provision of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, all other provisions not affected thereby shall remain valid.

**Sec. 6. Effectivity.** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

***Approved.***