

Angono Festivals

TAGALOG, RIZAL PROVINCE, SOUTHERN LUZON ISLAND, NORTHERN PHILIPPINES. *The lakeshore Angono municipality of Rizal province in Luzon is a virtual artists' town where sculptors, painters (even families of them) and musicians abound. National Artists have been declared among them. The Tagalog people conduct a twin celebration on the 22nd and 23rd of November annually.*



SAN CLEMENTE fluvial parade – One of the major festivals celebrated by the townfolks of Angono is the feast of St. Clement (*San Clemente*, in the vernacular), patron saint of fishermen. He is highly revered by the people, most of whom are fisherfolk who eke out a living from the Laguna Lake (*Laguna de Bay*). On the feast day (November 23), the image of San Clemente is carried on a barge heading a long parade of beautifully decorated boats along the lake. The fishermen and their families dress in fishermen's clothing, bearing occupational gear: boat paddles, fish nets, traps and others, and accompany the image back to the church. Little children called *parejadoras* are dressed in colorful costumes and participate in a mardi gras-like procession in salutation to the image of San Clemente.

Higantes Festival – This festival showcases the town's artistic tradition with music and visual arts activities, such as art exhibits and concerts.

The *Higantes* Festival features a series of brass band/drum and lyre parades, a hot-air balloon display and the *higantes* parade on the streets. The giant papier-mâché done by the town's artists in the late 1800s are symbols of Angono's artistry.

The traditional *Serena ng mga Banda* is held in the evening at the San Clemente Parish Church and features the renowned Angono National Symphonic Band and the Angono Concert Band.

The fiesta is highlighted by a thanksgiving mass, a fluvial procession at the Laguna Lake in honor of San Clemente, followed by the parade of the *parejadoras*, with the girls mimicking the paddling movement of fishermen to the music of marching bands. Adding merriment is the dousing of spectators and participants.

Situated east of Metro Manila, Angono is the only town to produce two National Artists: Carlos "Botong" Francisco for painting and Maestro Lucio San Pedro for music.

The town is also home to the petroglyphs. It is situated in a rock formation on the hilltops of Angono, believed to be the oldest form of art estimated to be more than 4,000 years old. UNESCO has named it one of the world's endangered cultural sites.

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(above) The fluvial parade is followed by a parade held on land by brass bands, and dancers, with papier mache *higantes* (giants) as the main attraction. (opposite page) The festooned barge of the image of San Clemente is the main feature of the fluvial parade held in Laguna Lake in honor of the patron saint.