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Two Los Angeles based organizations are marshalling the heavenly forces to protect those who serve in the US armed services.

Called Operation: Special Intention, the International Crusade for Holy Relics (ICHR) and the deacons of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles are launching a tour of the relics of the patron saints of the armed forces.

The relics of St. Anthony of Padua, patron of sailors, St. Therese of Lisieux, patron of pilots and air crews and St. Ignatius of Loyola, patron of soldiers will travel through the Archdiocese of Los Angeles beginning July 25th at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels.

The faithful are invited to offer prayers and to venerate the Holy Relics of the Saints. ICHR notes that some Christians regard veneration of relics as false worship. However, the purpose of venerating relics is actually to “beg them [the saints] to pray for us through the merits of Jesus Christ, while we ask Jesus to help us through his own merits.”

Thomas Serafin, ICHR president said, “With the men and women of our armed forces deployed in harm’s way throughout the world, we wanted to find a way to let those of us on the home front support the troops with our prayers for their safety and for peace in the world.” He continued, “It is also an opportunity for us to pray for the souls of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.”

The tour will run through August 8. After the tour of parishes in Los Angeles, the relics will be made available to other dioceses around the country. More information is available at www.olacathedral.org

The ICHR promotes education, preservation and veneration of relics. For more than a decade it has battled the illicit sale of relics on the internet, and has rescued thousands of religious artifacts slated to be sold or thrown away.