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**RELICS OF CHRIST'S PASSION TO BE DISPLAYED  
IN WASHINGTON DC AND ST. LOUIS**

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LOS ANGELES - Even before movies told the story of Jesus's final days on earth, the faithful for centuries venerated items believed to be associated with his death. Now several of those items or relics - from pieces of the cross, to replicas of the nails believed to have been used 2000 years ago to crucify Christ - will be on rare public display in St. Louis and Washington DC.

The relics will be shown at the Cathedral in St. Louis on Palm Sunday, April 4, and at the John Paul II Cultural Center in Washington DC from April 4-18. Large crowds are expected for both events, which are being organized by the Apostolate for Holy Relics (AHR) - a Los Angeles-based non profit that last year drew nearly 150,000 people to nationwide displays of a sixteenth century relic of St. Juan Diego.

"As the recent success of films on the final days of Christ's life show, people of faith still feel a deep connection to his death after 2000 years, and we hope that allowing people to see these relics will make that connection even stronger," said Andrew Walther, AHR Vice President.

"For those who cannot visit the relic shrines in Rome, or the Holy Land itself, this is as close as many people will come to artifacts associated with the crucifixion," Walther said. "We hope that people will come away from viewing these relics with an increased faith and personal connection to Christ's loving sacrifice."

AHR President Thomas Serafin added his thanks to those who are hosting the events: "We are grateful to Archbishop Burke and the Archdiocese of St. Louis and to the John Paul II Cultural Center for providing venues in which these rare and moving items can shown to the American public for the first time in recent memory," he said.