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Holy Name Province  
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**For Immediate Release**

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**FRANCISCANS TO TURN OVER EAST RUTHERFORD PARISH TO ARCHDIOCESE  
Friars Announce End of 99-Year Connection**

NEW YORK, N.Y. -- March 23, 2011 — The Franciscan Friars of Holy Name Province, with headquarters in Midtown Manhattan, announced this week that they are turning over the care of St. Joseph Parish in East Rutherford, N.J., to the Archdiocese of Newark.

The announcement was made at parish Masses the weekend of March 19. Father Kevin Daly, OFM, pastor, read a letter from provincial minister Father John O'Connor, OFM, and Father Dominic Monti, provincial vicar, that described the “painful decision” and explained the reasons behind the withdrawal.

The province decided to release St. Joseph’s, a parish that it has staffed for nearly a century, because of the declining number of available friars. This is making it difficult to support the East Rutherford church as well as the more than 40 other ministries that the Provincial operates.

“The decision comes after several months of intense discussion by our provincial council as we tried to meet the challenge of assigning friars to our various ministries, from New England to Florida,” said Fr. O’Connor, who talked with the staff of Archbishop John Myers of Newark as well as St. Joseph’s parish council.

In the last two decades, the province has been aging and growing smaller. At its peak in 1965, Holy Name Province had more than 1,000 friars compared to its current 350 friars, of whom 120 are over 75 years of age.

Archbishop Myers has assured Holy Name’s leaders that he will work with the province to affect a smooth transition to diocesan clergy. The official turnover from the province to the archdiocese will be July 1.

“East Rutherford holds a special place in the memories of many friars,” said Fr. O’Connor. “All of the friars who have been stationed there over the years have spoken highly of the great people of this parish.”

Among the friars who have served St. Joseph’s are the late Father Mychal Judge, OFM, who died on Sept. 11 and Father Christopher Keenan, OFM, current chaplain for the Fire Department of New York. The parish was founded in 1872 by diocesan clergy; the Franciscans succeeded them in 1912, working to build a dynamic Catholic parish community.

“The decision is dictated by the harsh fact of numbers – our Province is diminishing and aging,” said the provincial leaders. “Our personnel resources are becoming more strained each year, making it impossible for us to maintain the ministerial commitments we once did.” In addition to staffing HNP ministries, some friars work outside the Province, at schools and hospitals.

### **About Holy Name Province**

Holy Name Province is one of seven provinces in the United States that belong to the Order of Friars Minor. It is the largest U.S. province, with ministries in 12 states along the East Coast. Its Catholic priests and brothers serve in colleges, parishes, urban ministry centers and a wide variety of social ministries, as well as in missions in Africa, Asia and South America.

The Order, founded in 1209 by St. Francis of Assisi, commemorated its 800th anniversary in 2009. Today, St. Francis, whose feast day is Oct. 4, remains one of the most widely known saints, revered for his dedication to peace and care for creation.

Information about Holy Name Province can be found on [www.hnp.org](http://www.hnp.org) .

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