

## FRANCIS JOSEPH NOWALK



A man of deep and enduring faith, Francis Joseph Nowalk was received into the arms of his Redeemer on Monday, September 9, 2024. Son of the late Joseph G. and Catherine M. (Healy) Nowalk, Francis was born on October 7, 1928, the oldest of three children. Growing up in Carrick, he attended St. Basil's School, then North Catholic High School, which he loyally supported for decades after graduation. To

help pay tuition, Francis began working at Argo Light, a job which laid the foundation for his own lighting and metal fabrication business. Francis was a 1950 graduate of Duquesne University School of Business and was inducted into Duquesne University's Century Club in 2000. He was named Whitehall Borough's Person of the Year in 2015 and received the Diocese of Pittsburgh's Manifesting the Kingdom Award in 2013.

As a teenager, Francis met the love of his life, the late Teresa (Tess) Rectenwald, who were married for 69 years. Together they raised six children, James (Tricia) Nowalk, Robert (Jennifer) Nowalk, Mary (Patrick) Wood all of Whitehall Borough, Nancy (Scot) McKinnis and Beth (James) Schmiedlin of Culver Indiana and Sally (Ray) Helfer of Nashville. Their family includes 20 grandchildren and 25 great-grandchildren. In addition, Francis is survived by his sister, Kathleen Till; and cousin, Rosemary Grogan; sisters-in-law, Shirley Warner and Mary Helen Rectenwald; and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his brother, Tom; and sister-in-law, Lourdes Nowalk; and his brother-in-law, William Till.

Two themes that weave through Francis's life are faith and beauty. Francis was an influential and lifelong member of St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Virgin Church (Our Lady of Hope Parish) and School (now Mother of Mercy Academy.) In the 1970s, he led and served as spokesperson for the effort to construct the current church building for a young and growing parish. In the 1980s, he was the impetus for the tithing program "God's plan in the Bible," as the divinely ordained means for funding church operations, including a tuition-free Catholic school for 75 years. Francis served for many years on the St. Gabriel School Advisory Board and the church's Finance Committee and as an usher for 60 years.

From its humble beginning "in his mother's basement," Nowalk Lighting grew in size and stature to become the preeminent business of its kind in Pittsburgh. As a Master craftsman, Francis excelled in old world metalwork and held a special competence in bronze and crystal chandeliers. His work can be seen throughout the Pittsburgh region and beyond, in among many others, churches such as St. Paul's Cathedral, synagogues such as Rodef Shalom Temple, Heinz Hall, Pitt's Cathedral of Learning, the Allegheny County Courthouse, Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall and the finest homes in the area.

As a proud Irishman, Francis had a lovely tenor singing voice, which he used to entertain family and friends, as well as the gift of gab. Many who have stopped by his shop in Bloomfield over the last 75 years can tell a story of the time he spent and the knowledge he so freely shared, always tying the presence of beauty back to faith.

Friends will be received at the **JOHN F. SLATER FUNERAL HOME, INC.**, 412-881-4100, 4201 Brownsville Road, Brentwood 15227, on Friday, September 13, 2024, from 2-8 p.m., where a funeral prayer will be held on Saturday morning, at 9:15. Mass of Christian Burial in Our Lady of Hope Parish, St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Virgin Church, 5200 Greenridge Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15236, at 10:00 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to the Father John R. Haney Angel Fund, in care of Our Lady of Hope Parish, at 7003 Baptist Road, Bethel Park, PA 15102. Make checks payable to Our Lady of Hope Parish with "Fr. J.R. Haney Angel Fund-Nowalk" in the memo line. Please send condolences to

[www.johnfslater.com](http://www.johnfslater.com)

Send condolences [post-gazette.com/gb](mailto:post-gazette.com/gb)