

**August 31, 2003**

**Father James Grothjan, CPPS**



Father Grothjan was born Feb. 1, 1925, in Celina, Ohio. He entered the Society of the Precious Blood on Sept. 6, 1939, and was ordained May 24, 1951 by Archbishop Karl Alter of Cincinnati at Carthagena, Ohio.

His first assignment was to St. Mary, Garden City, where he served as an assistant until 1953. His other parish work took him to St. Francis in St. Joseph, Mo., and Sts. Peter and Paul in Ottawa, Ohio.

In 1959, Father Grothjan joined the U.S. Air Force as a chaplain, work that continued throughout the rest of his life as a priest. He completed the rest of his military career in 1976, retired while he was stationed at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. After his retirement, however, he continued to serve as an auxiliary chaplain at Eglin, where he ministered for over 30 years.

While at Eglin, Father Grothjan maintained a full schedule of weekend Masses for the servicemen and women. He also ministered to those in the federal prison located on the base, and to those in the base hospital. Throughout his years in the military, it was important to him to build unity among those he served. He stressed to servicemen and women that they were all part of the Body of Christ, and tried to help them see that they were all children of God.

After his retirement from the military, he spent months aboard the sailboat he built enjoying God's creation at sea.

Father Grothjan died Aug. 31, 2003, in the infirmary at St. Charles Center in Carthagena. He had been battling cancer since 1995. Father Angelo Anthony celebrated the funeral Mass. Burial was in the community cemetery.