

While the family was looking on dumbfounded and the spectators gazed in amazement, Gargam said in a full, strong voice that he wanted to get up. They thought that it was a delirium before death, and tried to soothe him, but he was not to be restrained. He got up and stood erect, walked a few paces and said that he was cured.

The multitude looked on in wonder, and then fell on their knees and thanked God for this new sign of His power at the Shrine of His Blessed Mother.

As Gargam had on him only invalid's clothes, he returned to the carriage and was wheeled back to the hotel. There he was soon dressed, and he proceeded to walk about as if nothing had ever ailed him. For two years hardly any food had passed his lips, but now he sat down to the table and ate a hearty meal!

SERVICE TO THE INVALIDS

On August 20th, 1901, sixty doctors examined Gargam. Without stating the nature of the cure, they pronounced him entirely cured. Gargam, out of gratitude to God in the Holy Eucharist and His Blessed Mother, consecrated himself to the service of the invalids at Lourdes.

He set up a small business and married a pious lady who aided him in his apostolate for the greater knowledge of Mary Immaculate. For over fifty years he returned each year to Lourdes and worked as a brancardier (attendant of the sick).

The Golden Jubilee of his cure was the occasion of a remarkable celebration during the French National Pilgrimage in 1951, With great acclaim, his miraculous two-fold healing was described publicly.

His last visit to the Shrine was on August 19, 1951, and he died the following March, at the age of eighty-three. *(excerpted from The 101 times #79)



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The Tragedy

**The case of Gabriel Gargam is one of the best known of all the thousands of cures at Lourdes, partly because he was so well known at the Shrine for half a century, and partly because it was a twofold healing, spiritual and physical.*

Born in 1870 of good Catholic parents, he gave early promise of being a clever student and a fervent Catholic. However, by the age 15 he had already lost his faith.

He obtained work in the postal service, and was carrying out his duties as a sorter. In December of 1899, a train on which he was carrying out his work, was traveling at high speed from Bordeaux to Paris. While in transit, it collided with another train, and Gargam was thrown out some fifty-two feet. He lay in the snow, badly injured and was unconscious for seven hours.

He was paralyzed from the waist down, and was barely alive when lifted onto a stretcher. Taken to a hospital, his existence for some time was a living death. Although he was normally a big man, after eight months he had wasted away to only seventy-eight pounds.

His feet became gangrenous. He could take no solid food and was obliged to take nourishment by a tube. Even in that way, he could only be fed once in twenty-four hours. Gargam's condition was pitiable to the extreme. He could not help himself even in the most trifling needs. Two trained nurses were needed at all times to assist him.

That was Gabriel Gargam as he was after the accident, and as he would continue to be until death relieved him. About his desperate condition, there could be no doubt.

The railroad fought the case on every point, but there was no room for deception or hearsay. Two courts attested to his condition, and the final payment of the railroad left the case a matter of record. Doctors testified that the man was a hopeless cripple for life.

Not A Church - Goer

Previous to the accident, Gargam had not been to Church for fifteen years. His aunt, who was a nun of the Order Of The Sacred Heart, begged him to go to Lourdes. He refused. She continued her appeals to him, to place himself in the hands of Our Lady of Lourdes. He was deaf to all her prayers. But, after the continuous pleading also of his mother, he finally consented to be taken there.

It was now two years since the accident, and not for a moment had he left his bed in all that time. He was carried on a stretcher to the train. The exertion caused him to faint, and for a full hour he was unconscious. They were on the point of abandoning the pilgrimage, as it looked as if he would die on the way, but his mother insisted and the journey was made.

He Received The Sacraments

Arriving at Lourdes, he went to confession and received Holy Communion. There was no change in his condition. Later he was carried to the miraculous pool and tenderly placed in its waters...no effect. Rather a bad effect resulted, for the exertion threw him into a swoon and he lay apparently dead.

As he did not revive, after a time they thought him dead. Sorrowfully they wheeled the carriage back to the hotel. On the way back they saw the procession of the Blessed Sacrament approaching. They stood aside to let it pass, having placed a cloth over the face of the man whom they supposed to be dead.

As the priest passed carrying the Sacred Host, he pronounced Benediction over the very sorrowful group around the covered body. Soon there was a movement from under the covering. To the amazement of the bystanders, the body raised itself to a sitting posture.

