

of being distinguished in the capacity of Christians, from what they were previously, by a virtue of which they scarcely recognize the name, when we shall say to them with the Apostle, *For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that every one of you should know how to preserve his body as a precious vessel in sanctification and in honor, and not give way to the passion of his lusts, like the Gentiles that know not God.* It is, I say, much to be feared that they will be alarmed at the proposal of purity and chastity, and that they will reject, when it is presented, the doctrine of the Son of God, saying with the men of Capernaum, on another subject, *Durus est hic sermo, et quis potest eum audire?* Since, however, by the grace of God, through the open profession we have made of this virtue, we have secured thus much, that they dare neither to do nor to mention anything contrary to it in our presence,—even going so far as to threaten Strangers when they offend against propriety before us, warning them that the French [222] and especially the black Robes, detest such liberties,—is it not most probable that, if once the holy Spirit takes them in hand, he will impress upon them so deeply, in every place and time, the respect they owe to his divine presence and immensity, that they will be very glad to be chaste in order to be Christians, and will ask earnestly to be Christians in order to be chaste? I imagine that it was for this particular purpose that Our Lord inspired us to put them under the special protection of saint Joseph. This great Saint,—who was in other times given as a Spouse to the glorious Virgin, to conceal both from the eyes of the world and from the Devil a virginity that God honored by his Incarnation,—has so much power with this Holy Lady, in whose