

Letter 043
Paris, October 14 1875

Dear Theo,

Just another few words to cheer myself as well as you. I advised you to dispose of your books, and advise it still. Be sure to do it, it will give you peace of mind. But at the same time be careful not to become narrow-minded, or afraid of reading what is well written, quite the contrary, such writings are a source of comfort in life.

'Que toutes les choses qui sont véritables, toutes les choses qui sont honnêtes, toutes les choses qui sont justes, tout les choses qui sont pures, toutes les choses qui sont amiables, tout les choses qui sont de bonne réputation, et où il y a quelque vertu, et qui sont dignes de louange, que toutes ces choses occupent vos pensées'. [Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; and if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.]

Seek only for light and freedom and do not immerse yourself too deeply in the worldly mire.

How I should like to have you here, to show you the Luxembourg and the Louvre, etc., but I have the feeling that you, too, will be coming here one day.

I have had quite a good letter from Anna, I am sending it on to you, but please let me have it back when you have read it.

Father once wrote to me, "Do not forget the story of Icarus, who wanted to fly to the sun, and having reached a certain height lost his wings and fell into the sea." You may often feel that neither Anna nor I are what we hope to become and that we still lag a long way behind Father and other people, that we lack soundness and simplicity and sincerity. One does not become simple and true overnight. But let us persevere, and above all have patience. He who believes, does not hasten. Still, there is a difference between our desire to become Christians and that of Icarus to fly to the sun.

To my mind, there is nothing wrong with having a reasonably strong body, so make sure you feed yourself properly, and if you feel very hungry sometimes, or rather, have a good appetite, then eat well. I assure you that that is what I do myself often enough, and above all used to do. Especially bread, in my opinion, my boy, and don't be too shy about it. "Bread is the staff of life," the English say (although they like meat as well, on the whole far too much).

And now, write again soon and about everyday matters, too, for a change. Take care of yourself and give my regards to anyone who asks about me. Let us hope we see each other in a month or two. I shake you warmly by the hand in my thoughts, and am always

Your loving brother, Vincent