

Letter 084
Dordrecht, 21 January 1877

Dear Theo,

You probably expected a letter from me sooner. I am getting along pretty well at the bookstore and am very busy; I go there at eight o'clock in the morning and I leave at one o'clock at night. But I like it that way.

I hope to go to Etten on 11 February, as you know, we celebrate this day as father's birthday. Will you be there also? I want to give him the Eliot's "news" (the translation of Scenes from a Clerical Life). If we put our money together to get him a present, we could give him in addition Adam Bede.

Last Sunday, I wrote to Mr. & Mrs. Jones to tell them that I was not coming back, and unintentionally the letter became rather long – out of the fullness of my heart. I wished them to remember me and asked them to wrap my recollection in the cloak of charity.

I have hung in my bedroom the two engravings Christus Consolator that you have given me. I saw the pictures at the museum, as well as Scheffer's "Christ in Gethsemane," which is unforgettable. Then there is a sketch of "Les Douleurs de la Terre" and several drawings, a sketch of his studio, and, as you know, the portrait of his mother. There are still other fine pictures, for instance, Achenbach and Schelfhout and Koekkoek and also a fine Allebé – an old man near the stove. Shall we look at them together someday?

The first Sunday I was here, I heard a sermon on "Behold, I make all things new." This morning I heard the Reverend Mr. Beversen in a little old church. There was Communion, and his text was: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."

The window in my bedroom looks out on the gardens where I can see pine trees, poplars, and the backs of old houses etc., one of them has a gutter covered with ivy. Dickens said: "A strange old plant is the ivy green." This view from my window can be solemn and gloomy, but you should see it in the light of the morning sun. Then when I contemplate it, I imagine a letter of yours in which you talked to me of houses covered with ivy. Do you remember it?

If you can afford it – if I can, I will do the same – you must subscribe to the Catholic Illustration of this year; there are prints in it from London by Doré – the wharves on the Thames, Westminster, Whitechapel, the underground railways, etc.

A schoolmaster [Görlitz] lives in the same house as I. Last Sunday, and today too, we took a fine walk together along the canals and outside the town along the river; we also passed that spot where you were waiting for the steamer.

This evening when the setting sun was reflected in the water and in the windows and cast a bright golden glow over everything, it looked just like a picture by Cuyp.

Write again as soon as you can. I shall have to do a lot of bookkeeping these days and shall be very busy. Give my kind regards to Roos, a handshake from

Your loving brother, Vincent