

# DAILY BREAD

“Grain of Hope : Slice of Heaven”

## ROGATION

**Blasted tree and flattened crops,**  
from Illustrations to Robert John Thornton,  
'The Pastorals of Virgil'.  
William Blake, 1821

Rogation days are periods of prayer and fasting; this year Rogation Sunday falls on 17 May 2020. It is often observed with a procession around the Parish boundaries (a ceremony known as “*Beating the Bounds*”) and a celebration of the Litany of Saints.

It was introduced into the Western Church as a Christian substitute for the Roman pagan celebration **Robigalia**, which was a ceremony to pray for the protection and blessing of crops for a bountiful harvest.

The word rogation dates from the late 14th century and means “**solemn supplication**” from the Latin *rogationem* “an asking, prayer, entreaty.”. The ancient root literally means “to stretch out (the hand),” from the PIE \***reg-** “to move in a straight line.”

**W**e pray for all suffering hunger or the loss of their livelihoods in farming as a result of the corona virus SARS CoV-2.

We pray for a shared determination to overcome the many challenges that the virus has inflicted on food production , and in particular for countries already suffering food shortages and famine as a result of conflict, economic crisis and climate change.

Amen.

## “EATING IS AN AGRICULTURAL ACT”

Wendell Berry, 1934  
Environmental activist, poet

**LODGING** is when a crop falls over. A crop is a finely balanced system, but various factors can cause it to lodge: strong winds, heavy rain, over-thick sowing which causes tall, thin stems and too much nitrogen in the soil can all be causes. The timing of lodging can affect yield, disease resistance, grain moisture and even loss of ripening.

Historically, farmers have reduced the risk of lodging by breeding shorter varieties. Modern wheat varieties are much shorter than heritage strains, which were typically 1.5m tall. Our variety of Spring-wheat will probably mature at 800mm tall.

In March, our seed-corn was sown very thickly in rich soil and unfortunately it lodged in recent heavy rains. Lucy has now thinned the crop to let more light in and improve air circulation. This will encourage tillering so the plants are more robust. We can already see them starting to perk up!

In contrast to the traditional “*Beating the Bounds*” which reaffirms existing boundaries, we ask that the Holy Spirit may guide us as we try to re-imagine our boundaries, including the boundaries between humankind and other life-forms, and between cultivation and wilding.

Right. Our wheat lodged after heavy rain in late April.

Above. Lucy has thinned out our wheat and it has ‘perked’ up, ready for the next stage of its growth.



St James's Church  
197 Piccadilly  
London  
W1J 9LL

