

Enduring Witness

May 3, 2026

Fifth Sunday of Easter

White

John 14:1-14

Stories of the enduring witness of the Celtic saints have always captured my imagination. What adventures they had, and what trust in God that they displayed! We all heard of St. Patrick overcoming being kidnapped, enslaved and using all of life's travails to glorify God — and chase a snake or two out of the Emerald Isle!

Today I want to introduce you to Gobnait. Believed to have been born in the sixth century, Gobnait was told by an angel to leave her home and keep wandering until nine white deer appeared. When they did, that then would be her place of resurrection — the place where life would be full of meaning.

So Gobnait went off in search of her place of resurrection, wandering for miles until one day the white deer appeared in what is now County Cork, Ireland. There she settled and built a monastery, living her resurrected life of prayer and praise — and beekeeping. (Gobnait is the patron saint of beekeepers.)

When I heard Gobnait's story, she instantly became my kindred saint. I resonated with the call to find one's place of resurrection, where all our longings are met and life's purpose becomes a divine one.

I guess it's safe to say that I'm always on the lookout for my own nine white deer. The moment I know I'm where I'm meant to be. But for all my yearning and searching, I realize that sometimes I must ask, "Have I already arrived?"

Before ascending to heaven, Jesus told his followers, "Do not let your hearts be troubled." It is a message we need to hear for our hearts seem to be in a perpetual state of troubling. We feel lonely even though we are not alone. We worry about daily bread for our tables, while others wonder if they will have a roof over their heads as the world-wide housing crisis continues. And we worry about the direction of our lives: Is there more to do? New places to go? Unrealized dreams? Wasted time to redeem?

It would be so wonderful to have white deer appear, for then we would know we have found our divine bliss.

But we all must find our own place of resurrection and that means each journey will be different. What remains the same is that Jesus assures our troubled hearts that there is no need to worry. He goes before us, preparing the way forward. There will always be a place in God's loving home. Perhaps that message is our white deer this day, making us see that wherever we go, we have already arrived.

Loving God, as we seek our place of resurrection, ease our troubled hearts on this journey by making us alert that we are not alone. You are with us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today's *Sunday Bulletin*.)