

Good morning,

In Sophie Redder's biography of Emmanuel Macron she recalls a newspaper interview he gave in 2015. In it he 'spoke of the 'emptiness' at the heart of the French Republic.' The cause of the vacuum, he suggested, was the absence of a 'king'.

It had created 'an emotional, imaginary collective void'.

He added that the French had over the centuries tried to fill it with monarchical figures such as Napoleon and de Gaulle.

Some think that since his election in 2017 President Macron has deliberately styled himself as a 'Jupiterian' leader to be 'the embodiment of the nation'.

Some 300 years after Louis 14th famously declared, 'L'etat, c'est moi' (The state – it's me) President Macron has again claimed the throne of France.

Here on this side of the Channel many contend we have ample evidence that a monarch embodies the nation, especially in this year of The Queen's Platinum Jubilee. But one of the traditions that's evolved is that the Monarchy rises above the political fray so that it might be a unifying symbol of the nation. Not so in France. The divisive election has cut the Republic in two.

Ever since there have been Kings and Queens there's been a notion of a divine right – that the Sovereign is anointed, given authority by God to rule. That's often resulted in despotic reigns.

But with the coming of Jesus and his own claim to be a King there's a new model of Kingship and leadership.

Not that Jesus was a powerless leader. He had no power within the structures but he was powerful charismatically – he could silence critics, make people part with their money, walk through hostile crowds, heal the sick – he could and did make a material difference to people's lives.

But he did all of that with a humility that didn't vault himself over others.

In the Easter Story Pontius Pilate questioned Jesus about his kingship. Jesus replied, 'My kingdom is not of this world'. That didn't mean Heaven was indifferent to what happens here on Earth. But that his authority to be King came not from Pilate but from God. Such knowledge gave him humility.

President Macron bruised by an intense campaign might reflect, together with politicians of every hue, that it might be humility which brings out the best in people – whether Kings, Queens or Presidents.

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