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SIR MICHAEL PALLISER'S
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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

2 February 1982

Sir Mark Heath KCVO CMG
HOLY SEE

Dear Mark,

1. We expect to receive in the very near future The Queen's formal approval to your appointment as Britain's first Ambassador to the Holy See. I am therefore writing to offer you my warmest congratulations on the appointment and to wish you every success in your new post.
2. It is a source of personal as well as professional satisfaction to me that we should have finally succeeded in announcing the decision to upgrade. The proposal has been kept on ice for so long (regularly retrieved from storage only to be returned there by pressure of events such as those in Northern Ireland) that many of us, not least myself, have at times doubted whether there would ever be a convenient time to take the plunge.
3. Nevertheless, a bold and sensible decision was taken and it is a credit to everyone, and particularly Ministers, that we have managed to announce the upgrading well in advance of the Pope's visit. I am delighted that the change will take effect during your (and my) period of office. I have no doubt that the new level of representation will lead to an increasingly valuable exchange between Her Majesty's Government and the Vatican to the mutual benefit of both.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Palliser

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