Roman Catholic Church General Correspondence

This letter was sent to Pope Francis. There is an error in the letter. The Bishop of Richmond did reply, but only to say that he didn't know of any church in his diocese hosting either the SCV or UDC. In its essentials the letter is correct, the Roman Catholic leaders contacted in the United States of America have avoided the issues raised by my letters.  It is too early as of 10/25/2014 to expect a reply. The letter was sent by certified mail.

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| June 1, 2014                                                                       Edward H. Sebesta  [esebesta@tx.rr.com](mailto:esebesta@tx.rr.com)    His Holiness, Pope Francis  Apostolic Palace  00120 Vatican City  Dear Your Holiness Pope Francis:  I am writing you regarding the involvement of the Catholic Church in America with neo-Confederate groups. I enclose a couple pictures of large Confederate battle flags displayed at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Mobile, Alabama, United States of America.  I am an investigative researcher of the neo-Confederate movement and have been published by university presses and by peer reviewed academic journals as well as the online publication *Black Commentator*. My resume is enclosed and is available online at [www.templeofdemocracy.com/resume.htm](http://www.templeofdemocracy.com/resume.htm). My website is not sectarian but refers to a 19th century metaphor regarding the American Republic.  I enclose EXCEL tables of churches hosting the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) and the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) along with bar graphs of hosting churches by denomination for the years 1990 to 2014. As you can see in the combined graph for the UDC and SCV, the Catholic Church is no. 2 in hosting these two groups. The EXCEL tables and bar graphs are also online at[www.templeofdemocracy.com/churchesoftheconfederacy.htm](http://www.templeofdemocracy.com/churchesoftheconfederacy.htm). At this web page are additional links to web pages detailing my correspondence with churches regarding their enabling of neo-Confederate groups and their replies if any.  The SCV is a group whose record I think demonstrates both racism and extremism. I enclose a paper published at *Black Commentator* which is also available online in a free quest link at<http://www.blackcommentator2.com/527_cover_scv_donation_loss_sebesta_guest.html>. There is also a link from my online resume.  I have not yet published a write up on the UDC. However, for the historical record regarding the UDC and race I refer you to the website [www.confederatepastpresent.org](http://www.confederatepastpresent.org)and suggest you use the search term “daughters.” You will find in the UDC’s own writings their opposition to the mid-20th century civil rights movement, and earlier in the 20th century you will find in their writings and publications their support for the KKK and white supremacy.  For documentation of the UDC’s racism in the 21st century, I enclose three articles from the *UDC Magazine*. The UDC currently runs a Red Shirt Shrine to glorify a violent white supremacist group that existed in 19th century South Carolina and of which they are proud of as documented in the June/July 2001 *UDC Magazine*article, pages 23, 24, and the cover of their magazine.  In the Dec. 2012 *UDC Magazine*, pages 11-14, is an appalling racist article in which the infamous post-Civil War Black Codes of the former Confederate states are defended, African American men are represented have been potential rapists, the 14th Amendment to the Constitution is argued to be misguided, and freed African Americans are asserted to have been incompetent to be citizens. The article asserts, “Newly liberated Negroes were not prepared for their freedom…”  In the Nov. 2007 *UDC Magazine* on page 15 is an article recommending that the reader purchase the book “Southern by the Grace of God,” by Michael Andrew Grissom. This white supremacist book praises the Ku Klux Klan of the 19th and 20thcentury as well as other violent white supremacist groups, praises a lynching in Oklahoma, recommends pro-Ku Klux Klan media such as the movie “Birth of a Nation” and the writings of Thomas Dixon. It recommends that the reader join the Council of Conservative Citizens ([www.cofcc.org](file:///D:\Documents\Institute\Church\www.cofcc.org)).  The author of the article Retta D. Tindall, calls this book along with other books “treasures” and that “Mr. Grissom wrote this book for four reasons: to offer a firm understanding of our heritage, to instill pride in being Southern, to pursue the elements that characterize the South, and to rally Southerners to defend and preserve their unique heritage.” Grissom’s book makes it very clear that he feels that violent white supremacist groups like the KKK and others are part of Southern heritage, and Tindal recommends this book and others be given to the reader’s “child or a grandchild.” These are but three contemporary examples of the UDC’s racism.  Finally the SCV and the UDC exist to glorify the Confederacy a government created to perpetuate slavery and white supremacy. This is in itself a reason to not enable them or lend them any resources.  When the Catholic Church lends the use of their building to a neo-Confederate group, especially when the building, such as a church, is historically or architecturally prestigious, additionally when a church is a consecrated space, there is an implied endorsement that these groups are legitimate enough that the buildings would be given for their use. The prestige of the building and the Catholic Church is given to the neo-Confederate group.  I ask that the Catholic Church not lend the use of their buildings or other facilities to neo-Confederate groups.  I have written to the bishops and the archbishops whose dioceses and archdioceses respectively encompass where the 2014, 2015, and 2016 SCV and UDC conventions are scheduled: North Charleston, South Carolina; Richmond, Virginia; and Dallas, Texas; of which all locations are in the United States of America.  I wrote Most Rev. Robert E. Guglielmone, Bishop of Charleston Diocese; Most Rev. Wilton D. Gregory, Archbishop of Atlanta; Most Rev. Francis Xavier DiLorenzo, Bishop of Richmond Diocese; Most Rev. William E. Lori, Archbishop of Baltimore; Most Rev. Kevin J. Ferrell Bishop of Dallas; and Most Rev. Gustavo Garcia-Siller, Archbishop of San Antonio. The correspondence is online at[www.templeofdemocracy.com/churchesoftheconfederacy.htm](http://www.templeofdemocracy.com/churchesoftheconfederacy.htm). I enclose copies of my correspondence.  Only Rev. Gustavo Garcia-Siller replied. He informed me that “I am not the bishop of Dallas, and do not have pastorship of those parishes there.” Not being an expert on the organization of the Catholic Church is he saying that he could not have any input into what should be the practice of parishes in Dallas? I did conclude that he was going to do nothing.  Even regarding San Antonio his letter evades my question. He quotes a section of*Gaudium et Spes*, 29, which is against discrimination and says that my information will be passed along, but he doesn’t say whether he finds the Catholic Church hosting the SCV a practice that would be against the *Gaudium et Spes* or a simple statement that they wouldn’t host the SCV. I feel his letter is an evasion of my request.  I find the lack of responses by the bishops & archbishops and the reply by Bishop Garcia-Siller to be puzzling. Visiting the websites of the Catholic dioceses & archdioceses and their bishops & archbishops a person would find that they have clear outspoken positions on many topics.  I am concerned with mainstream organizations enabling the neo-Confederate movement. After *Black Commentator* published my paper on the SCV I was able to get major corporations to stop supporting them through an affinity purchasing group. It took about eight days from when the corporations received the letters I wrote to the program being stopped. *Black Commentator* published the story of this campaign which is also available through a free guest link, which is also in my online resume, at<http://www.blackcommentator2.com/527_cover_scv_donation_loss_sebesta_guest.html>.  After this initial success I decided to then ask American churches that enable neo-Confederate groups to stop doing so. Most American churches proclaim that they are anti-racist and express great concern about racism unlike corporations whose concern with racism is usually a paragraph in their personnel handbooks. I was optimistic and thought that this would be an easy task. I regret to say that so far the temples of Mammon were much more willing to give up neo-Confederacy than the churches of Christ.  If the Catholic Church could stop lending the use of their facilities to neo-Confederate groups besides not enabling neo-Confederate groups, they could set an example to other denominations regarding hosting neo-Confederate groups. So again I ask that the Catholic Church not lend the use of their facilities to neo-Confederate groups and using a slogan currently popular in America to “walk the talk” of*Gaudium et Spes*.                                                                     Sincerely Yours,                                                                       Edward H. Sebesta  P.S. I enclose documentation of St. Jerome’s in Houston, Texas hosting regular meetings of the UDC. I wrote them. No reply. |