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Sister on meeting pope: 'A man who wants to connect'

Joshua J. McElwee | Oct. 17, 2013 The Francis Chronicles

Maryknoll Sr. Teresa Dagdag says she didn't expect to meet Pope Francis on Oct. 3. But as she walked away from a brief encounter with him, she says she saw "a simple man, a man of God, a man who wants to connect."

A native of the Philippines, Dagdag is the executive co-secretary of a group of leaders of international orders of men and women religious who focus on social justice issues.

Called the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Commission, its members include the superiors general of eight orders, the general secretaries of the two groups that represent all men and women religious internationally, and a representative from the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

Dagdag met the pope during a special audience he held with a group of international leaders celebrating the 50th anniversary of *Pacem in Terris* earlier this month [1], hosted by the pontifical council.

"I went away knowing that this Pope was intent on continuing the reforms that he had intended to introduce and that he wanted to have short encounters like this because he had said that he needs to talk to people, to find out what they think, and I add, to know how they could help in this reform," she writes in a blog for the Maryknoll Sisters [2] posted Oct. 11.

"The Pope impressed me as a simple man, a man of God, a man who wants to connect," she writes. "[H]oly in the sense that this Pope wants to work for the Kingdom of God ? for justice, peace, love and freedom?and that is exactly what we religious want to spend our lives on, to make this ministry for justice and peace the central dimension of our consecrated lives."

[Joshua J. McElwee is *NCR* national correspondent. His email address is jmcelwee@ncronline.org [3]. Follow him on Twitter: @joshjmac [4].]

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