Dallas, Texas: A Composition of Place
Introduction

What does it mean to be “Companions in a Mission of Reconciliation and Justice”? In urging all Jesuits to a renewed emphasis on the mission of reconciliation and justice, the 36th General Congregation reminds us that “reconciliation is always a work of justice, a justice discerned and enacted in local communities and contexts,” (GC 36, d. 1, no. 21).

This document intends to invite Jesuit communities and works to engage in that discernment and enactment, sensitive to the ways in which God labors in their local context. By bringing to light the call for reconciliation in all its forms, “reconciliation with God, with one another, and with creation” (GC 36, d. 1, no. 21), we hope to help bring about the “profound spiritual renewal” of the Society to which God invites us in this and in all times (GC 36, d. 1, no. 18).

The study comprises two parts. Part I takes a deep look at the social and economic dimensions of Dallas, a look that “allows us to understand reality more deeply and thus to serve more effectively” the people of the city (GC 36, d. 1, no. 33, quoting Adolfo Nicolás, SJ). The data below are meant to train our eyes of faith on the daily “suffering, vulnerable faces of people, indeed in the suffering of creation” in Dallas (GC 36, d. 1, no. 20).

Part II presents questions that are meant to inspire reflection on how we can know and follow God’s will for us in light of the social and economic challenges of Dallas set forth in Part I. By holding up the reality of the city to the call of the Gospel to attend to the cry of the poor and the earth, these questions are meant to promote “apostolic audacity” and a “generous personal response” as a life and mission (GC 36, d. 1, no. 19).
PART 1: Local Context

Population

The City of Dallas is the third largest city in Texas (after Houston and San Antonio) with a population of roughly 1.3 million. It is part of Dallas County, which has a population of more than 2.5 million. The city is quite diverse and “majority minority” (non-Hispanic whites make up less than 30% of the population).

Figure 1: Dallas Population: 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Change From 2005</th>
<th>Median Age</th>
<th>Youth Share</th>
<th>Female Share</th>
<th>Foreign -born Share</th>
<th>Limited English-Speaking Share</th>
<th>Married Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,278,433</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>50.3%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>39.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2016 5-year Averages and U.S. Census Bureau’s Statistical Atlas.
Notes: 1 – figure is for households reporting limited English proficiency. 2 – Figure includes persons 15 years and older.

Figure 2: Population by Race/Ethnicity

Dallas

- Non-Hispanic White: 41.5%
- Black/African American: 24.3%
- Hispanic: 11.6%
- Other: 3.2%
- Asian: 2.2%
- Limited English-Speaking: 1.8%

Texas

- Non-Hispanic White: 38.6%
- Black/African American: 12.6%
- Hispanic: 11.6%
- Other: 3.3%
- Asian: 2%
- Limited English-Speaking: 2%

United States

- Non-Hispanic White: 62%
- Black/African American: 16.9%
- Hispanic: 11.6%
- Other: 3.3%
- Asian: 2%
- Limited English-Speaking: 5.2%

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2016 5-year Averages and the Census Bureau's American FactFinder.
Notes: 1 - Latino/Hispanic persons are not included in any other category.
**Religion**

The number of Catholics in Dallas County decreased by about 7% from 2000 to 2010. Further, their share of the population of the county dropped from 21.7% to 18.9%. The data further indicated that the major change from 2000 to 2010 was in the number and proportion of Evangelical Protestants. A greater than 32% increase in their numbers (to well over 600,000) means that in 2010 they made up about 26% of the population of Dallas County.

**Figure 3: Dallas County Religion: 2000 and 2010**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>“Nones” Share</th>
<th>All Denominations</th>
<th>Catholic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Congregations</td>
<td>Adherents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2,368,139</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
<td>2,336</td>
<td>1,455,158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2,218,899</td>
<td>44.9%</td>
<td>2,233</td>
<td>1,222,752</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: 1 - Data from the decennial religion census is provided by county. The next religion census will be in 2020. 2 - “Nones” refers to those respondents who did not identify with any of the 236 religious groups in the survey. So this number includes non-believers, as well as some believers who are unaffiliated with any particular faith/denomination (at least among the 236 identified in the survey).

**Education**

In Dallas County, about 7.7% of children (5-18) are in private/parochial school. As is typical across the nation, white children are more likely than children of color to be in private schools (see Figure 4). In Dallas, about 21% of white kids are in private school, in comparison to 5.2% of African-American kids and 3.7% of Hispanic kids. Diving deeper into the data, we find that about 46% of all private school students are white, but they make up less than 29% of all school-age kids in the city.

**Figure 4: Dallas County Private/Parochial and Public School School Enrollment Rate: 2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Public School</th>
<th>Private School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic White</td>
<td>75.1%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>90.8%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>91.9%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>88.3%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2016 5-year Averages.
Notes: 1- The percentages refer to the proportion of all children ages 5-18 in Dallas County.
In Dallas, educational attainment differs by race/ethnicity in ways that are similar to the national divide—minorities are more likely to be limited to a high school diploma or less, while whites are more likely than others to have a college education (see Figure 5 below). In Dallas County, nearly 75% of all Hispanics have a high school diploma or less. That number is 41% for African-Americans and only about 24% for whites. And while nearly 48% of whites have a bachelor’s degree or higher, and less than 21% of African-Americans and about 9% of Hispanics have reached that level of education. There are two primary reasons for this educational achievement gap. First is the lack of educational opportunities for those with limited income or who face discrimination. The second reason for the gap is the expense of higher education.

**Figure 5: Dallas County Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-Hispanic White</th>
<th>Black/African American</th>
<th>Hispanic/Latino</th>
<th>Total (All Races/Ethnicities)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A, No School</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No H.S. Diploma or GED</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.S. Diploma or GED</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree or Higher</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2016 5-year Averages.
Note: 1 – Survey of adults 25 and older.

**Today’s prime educational objective must be to form men-and-women-for-others’...who cannot even conceive of love of God which does not include love for the least of their neighbors.** – Pedro Arrupe, S.J.
Household Income

The median household income for non-Hispanic whites in Dallas County is $71,429. This is significantly more than the median income for Hispanic and African-American households, which are $41,644 and $38,337, respectively.

Regardless of race, we know that over half of all the income earned in Dallas County goes to households in the top 1/5 (quintile) of income earners. The bottom 1/5 saw just 3.2% of the income in Dallas County (similar numbers are found nationally). This income inequality significantly impacts people’s lives and life chances. Figure 6 further summarizes the overall income distribution in Dallas County.

Figure 7 shows the percentage of racial groups in the top 20% and the bottom 20% of income earners. About one-third of all white households have incomes in the top fifth of income earners, whereas only about one-tenth of black households and one-twelfth of Hispanic households have incomes at that level. Conversely, fewer than one in seven white households have incomes in the bottom 20% of income earners, but about one in three black households and one in five Hispanic households have incomes that low.

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2016 5-year Averages.
Wages and Unemployment

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the national unemployment rate for the 3rd quarter of 2018 was 3.8%. For Texas it was 3.9% and for Dallas County it was 3.7%.

The African American unemployment rate of 5.7% was nearly double the white unemployment rate of 2.9% in Texas. The rates for Hispanics and Asians were 4.5% and 3.4%, respectively.

In median hourly wages, Texas ranks 25th of the 50 states with a wage of $17.06. The state’s minimum wage is $7.25 per hour, which is the federal rate (a majority of states at this point have enacted a higher minimum wage). A person who works 40 hours a week for 52 weeks a year at a $7.25/hour rate will earn an annual income of just $15,080. This is not enough to get a family of 2 above the official poverty threshold. The last time the federal minimum wage was raised was in 2009.

Texas is a “right to work” state, which means that workers are allowed to not join a union or pay union dues even if they benefit from a union contract. Such laws undermine unions, and union wages, which are generally higher than non-union wages.

Poverty

The official poverty threshold (a level of income below which you would be identified as “poor”) was set decades ago and has only been adjusted for inflation. The original formula is widely seen as outdated and causing a gross undercounting of the population that is truly living in poverty. For example, a family of 4 in 2016 would have to have an income below $24,300 to be considered officially poor. This is extremely low. Yet even by this standard, millions of Americans and around 400,000 people in Dallas County are living in poverty.

People of color are substantially more likely to be poor (see Figure 8 right). This is true across Texas and the United States. This is rooted in a history of racism/discrimination at the individual and structural levels.

(continued on next page)

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2016 5-year Averages.
Discrimination based on race/ethnicity has been found both in the past and today to exist in virtually all areas of economic and social life—when applying for a loan, in the criminal justice system, and in education, for example. Such experiences necessarily lead to more difficult economic circumstances, including a greater likelihood of living in poverty.

Of all age groups, children are the most likely to be living in poverty. Furthermore, child poverty, as Figure 8 shows, is much higher in the Hispanic and black communities than it is in the white community. In fact, 1 out of every 3 Black and Hispanic children in Dallas lives in poverty as defined by the federal government.

The Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance (www.mdhadallas.org), based on their most recent point-in-time count from January 2018, has identified over 3500 homeless individuals in the city of Dallas. (“Homeless” refers to people who are in shelters, transitional housing programs, or found to be unsheltered.) This represents a continuing increase in the homeless population in Dallas. Similar studies in neighboring counties are showing increases, as well.

The problem of homelessness persists in the Dallas area and across the nation and is due largely to the lack of affordable housing. This relates to both the increasing cost of housing and the fact that wages are not keeping up with this and other costs.

The data in Figure 9 include three measurements that depict special challenges faced by many young people and families. Typically, single-parent families must make due with less income and have one parent do the household and childcare work that can be challenging even for two parents. Single-parent families, then, tend to be poorer and more stressed.

Disconnected youth are by definition not in school or employed and ultimately are at greater risk of future economic hardships.

Many families are considered to be “housing burdened”—meaning that they are paying more than 30% of their income in rent or mortgage. That means less money to spend on all of the other essentials of life.
The Social Welfare System

In Dallas County, only about 36% of poor families receive cash assistance, such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) or Supplemental Security Income\(^1\) (SSI). Less than half receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits (formerly called “food stamps”). In fact, about 39% of people in Dallas County living below the poverty line receive neither cash assistance nor SNAP benefits. The bottom line is that poor people receive little to no help. If somehow a family was able to access welfare assistance, the maximum TANF benefit in Texas for a family with one parent and two children is $290 per month or $3480 per year or about 17% of the poverty line ($20,780 in 2018).

Note: 1- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a program available to low income disabled or elderly individuals who meet certain specific eligibility requirements.

Health

Texas has the highest uninsured rate in the nation (17.3%) and the rate for Dallas, specifically, is even higher (see Figure 10 right). This has a great deal to do with the state government’s refusal to expand Medicaid coverage as provided for by the Affordable Care Act. It has been estimated that well over a million Texans would benefit from Medicaid expansion. Analysis also indicates that such an expansion would be a boost to the economy of the state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dallas County</td>
<td>21.6(^1)</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1 – County data on the uninsured rate is for 2016 and supplied by the Small Area Health Insurance Estimates Program of the Census Bureau.

Birth Indicators

Rates of unintended pregnancies, abortions, and teen births have been on the decline for a number of years across the country and are at or near record lows. The unintended pregnancy and teen birth rates are much higher in Texas than in the nation as a whole. On the other hand, the abortion rate is much lower, as shown to the right.

- About 54% of all pregnancies (to women 15-44 years of age) in Texas are unintended. The national percentage is 45%.\(^1\)
- The abortion rate in Texas is 9.8 for every 1000 women, ages 15-44. Nationally, the abortion rate is 14.6.\(^2\)
- The teen birth rate in Texas is about 31 births for every 1000 females, ages 15-19. The national rate is 20.3.\(^3\)

Sources: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Guttmacher Institute.

Notes: 1 – Share of all pregnancies for women 15-44 years old. 2 – Per 1,000 women 15-44 years old. 3 – Births per 1,000 women 15-19 years old.
Infant Mortality

Infant mortality refers to babies that do not live to their first birthday. The reported rate is the number who die for every 1000 live births. Infant mortality rates for the nation and for Texas remain high when compared with virtually any country in the “developed world.” Texas’ rate is slightly better than for the U.S. as a whole, while Dallas’ rate is the same as the nation’s. In Texas, the African American infant mortality rate (9.8) is double the rate for whites (4.9). The Hispanic rate is 5.2.

Maternal Mortality Rate

Maternal mortality refers to deaths due to complications from pregnancy. The rate is the number per 100,000 births. The United States has the highest maternal mortality rate (20.7) in the developed world. Texas’ rate of 34.2 is significantly above the national average. In fact, it ranks 43rd of the 50 states. There is a significant racial gap in Texas’ maternal mortality rate, which is presented in Figure 12.

Drugs

Texas, like every other state, has problems with drugs and addiction. However, looking specifically at overdose death rates, we see that Texas has much less of a problem than we find nationally (see Figure 13). It ranks among the states with the lowest rates. Experts are warning, however, that things can change. Here are words of caution from the Texas Health Institute (www.texashealthinstitute.org) last April: “While illicit drugs laced with fentanyl are driving a recent wave of overdose deaths nationally...Texas has been insulated from the lethal impact of fentanyl primarily because the most commonly used type of heroin in Texas,

Figure 11: Infant Mortality Rates (per 100,000): 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Rate (per 100,000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dallas County</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Kids Count Data Center of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Note 1 - According to the CIA’s World Fact Book and the Population Reference Bureau, there are well over 40 nations with a lower infant mortality rate than the United States, and we continue to fall behind. (Examples from the Fact Book: Japan, 2.0; Ireland 3.6; Cuba, 4.4, Canada 4.5).

Figure 12: Maternal Mortality Rate by Race/Ethnicity in Texas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Rate (per 100,000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic White</td>
<td>85.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CDC and United Health Foundation.
Note 1 - The rates presented here are 5-year averages, 2011-15.

Figure 13: Drug Overdose Death Rates (per 100,000): 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Rate (per 100,000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Kaiser Family Foundation.

black tar, is harder to mix with fentanyl than the white powder heroin most prevalent in the Midwest and Appalachia. (continued on next page)
Violence and Crime

Overall, crime rates in Texas are above the national average (see Figure 14). Homicide is a notable exception, though not for Dallas. The city of Dallas, specifically, has crime rates significantly above the rates found in the state as a whole, or the nation. The prevalence of street crime in Dallas or almost anywhere in America is largely a confluence of poverty, racial inequity, and limited educational and economic opportunities. The good news is that around the country crime, in general, has been in long-term decline. However, there does appear to be a very recent rebound in crime rates.

Incarceration

Texas has higher incarceration rates than the nation as a whole (see Figure 15). In the State, just as in the Nation, there is a significant racial gap. In Texas, the black/African American incarceration rate is more than 4 times the rate for whites. The Hispanic incarceration rate is also much higher than the rate for whites.

Drugs (continued)

But that could soon change. According to experts, white powder heroin use is increasing in Texas, drug suppliers are developing new ways to mix fentanyl with black tar heroin, and fentanyl is increasingly being mixed with drugs other than heroin. An uptick in opioid overdoses and deaths in Texas becomes more likely under these conditions.”

Firearm Death Rate

The United States has the highest firearm death rate in the developed world. In 2016, the rate was 11.8 deaths per 100,000 of the population from all firearm related causes—suicide, accidents, homicide. Texas’ rate of 12.1 was somewhat higher. (Alaska had the highest rate at 23.3 and Massachusetts the lowest at 3.4.)

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

### Figure 14: Reported Crime Rates (per 100,000): 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Property Crime Rate</th>
<th>Violent Crime Rate</th>
<th>Homicide Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>3,185</td>
<td>775</td>
<td>12.5 (actual #: 167)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>2,563</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>5.0 (actual #: 1,412)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>2,362</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>5.3 (actual #: 17,284)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Notes: 1 – The rates in this chart represent the numbers of crimes reported to the police and recorded by the FBI. Most crimes go unreported, it should be noted. 2 – The property crimes here refer to Burglary, Larceny-Theft, Motor Vehicle Theft and Arson. 3 – The violent crimes are Murder/Non-negligent Homicide, Forcible (not Statutory) Rape, Aggravated Assault, and Robbery.

### Figure 15: Incarceration Rates (per 100,000): 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Prison Incarceration Rate</th>
<th>Jail Incarceration Rate</th>
<th>White Imprisonment Rate</th>
<th>Black Imprisonment Rate</th>
<th>Hispanic Imprisonment Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>1,844</td>
<td>541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>1,408</td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Sentencing Project.

Notes: 1 – Figures typically reflect sentences of 1 year or more. Rates are for 2016. 2 – Figures typically reflect jail sentences of less than 1 year and served in local city or county facilities. Jail inmates also include those awaiting trial. Jail incarceration rate is for 2013. 3—Rates by race/ethnicity are for 2014.
Civic Engagement

Voter registration and voter turnout rates in Texas lag behind the national rates, except African-American voter registration. Latino/Hispanic voting rates are quite low nationally, but particularly so in Texas. While white voter turnout in Texas is 62.9%, Hispanic turnout is 40.5%.

Figure 16: Texas Civic Engagement: 2016

Dallas faces a number of environmental challenges, probably the worst being air pollution from transportation and industry. Ozone levels are particularly high. This, together with other forms of air pollution have a significant impact on public health, especially related to respiratory illnesses like asthma.

Dallas, like the rest of the world, is also facing climate change. Temperatures are heating up, ocean levels are rising and more powerful storms will be threatening the region. Climate change threatens agriculture, industry, and, of course, human health. The financial toll will be significant.

Pope Francis, in his Encyclical, *Laudato Si’*, reminds us of the importance of caring for God’s creation: “Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth.”

Source: Green Source DFW, The Fourth National Climate Assessment and *Laudato Si*: On Care for our Common Home.

Note 1 – Among the rich Jesuit resources available on the environment is the International Jesuit Ecology Project. Their educational materials can be found at: www.luc.edu/ijep. Also, the Carmelites have created a useful high school curriculum and an adult study guide to teach *Laudato Si’*. Interested individuals, schools and parishes can check it out at www.laudato-si-for-all.com.
PART 2 - Reflections

Many national, state and local authorities, businesses, and other organizations make policies that profoundly affect the people of Dallas whom we strive to serve in the name of Jesus. As we think on these data, we might reflect upon how we as individuals and Jesuit communities and ministries can become more effectively involved in decisions bearing upon the common good.

So it is with faith: if it is alone and includes no actions, then it is dead (James 2:17).

What is it for which you are spending your life?
- Sr. Joan Chittister, O.S.B.

Questions for Reflection

1. In view of the fact that about 39% of the Dallas population is unaffiliated with any religious denomination (“nones”), and of our significant Jesuit resources, in what new ways are we called to reach out beyond our institutions to bring the reconciling Good News of Jesus Christ?

2. Given the significant educational inequalities that exist in the Dallas area (not to mention many other social injustices) is the Jesuit community and our schools doing all that we can to challenge these injustices in word and deed and to promote greater reconciliation?

3. Pope Francis has urged us “to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.” What exactly does this demand of us in the Dallas context?

Never, never be afraid to do what’s right, especially if the well-being of a person...is at stake.
Society’s punishments are small compared to the wounds we inflict on our soul when we look the other way.
—Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.