



CENTER FOR CATHOLIC STUDIES

TO: WBC AND MICAH PARTICIPANTS

FROM: MONSIGNOR RICHARD M. LIDDY

SUBJECT: LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

DATE: NOVEMBER 2016

- Welcome and Self-Introductions
- Woodstock Business Conference Mission Statement
 - The Mission of the Woodstock Business Conference is to establish and lead a national and international network of business executives to explore their respective religious traditions in order to assist the individual executives:
 - To integrate faith, family and professional life,
 - To develop a corporate culture that is reflective of their religious faith and values and
 - To exercise a beneficial influence upon society at large
 - The Conference, grounded in the Roman Catholic tradition, welcomes believers who are open to and respectful of one another's religious tradition. It is committed to the conviction that ethics and values grow out of one's religious heritage.
- **Scripture Reading: 2 Timothy 4: 1-5**
- **In the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who is coming to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingly power, I charge you to preach the word, to stay with this task whether convenient or inconvenient—correcting, reproving,**

appealing—constantly teaching and never losing patience. For the time will come when the people will not tolerate sound doctrine, but, following their own desires, will surround themselves with teachers who tickle their ears. They will stop listening to truth and wander off to fables. As for you, be stable and self-possessed; put up with hardship, perform your work as an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

REFLECTION: Spend 5 minutes in quiet reflection and if possible share your insights with others.

TOPIC: The San Antonio Spurs Are Coached to Think for Themselves

The San Antonio Spurs Are Coached to Think for Themselves

Why Gregg Popovich wants his NBA players to be engaged in the world and knowledgeable about current events

By [BEN COHEN](#)

Oct. 6, 2016 11:42 a.m. ET

San Antonio

Gregg Popovich came to San Antonio Spurs training camp this year prepared with some questions for his players. Such as: Who were the explorers pushing west in early America? What is the fourth holy city of Islam? And where is one in danger of being attacked by wombats?

This is not what most NBA teams talk about. It's not what employees in a typical office talk about. But their boss is the one who demands the Spurs broach these topics and more serious ones at their place of work.

Popovich has been quizzing the Spurs on current events and world history for years. Now he wants them to engage more than ever. So this season, for the first time, he also plans to track which players know the most about everything other than basketball.

"What's cool is that everybody looks at that person, like: How do you know that?" Popovich said. "Then you walk away and you watch and two or three guys are talking over here and two or three are talking over there. Or if I say something about Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump or the political system, they talk about it. It brings them together. There's a purpose to it—and it's fun for me."

It's in large part because of Popovich's intellectual curiosity that this basketball team in the middle of Texas is usually acknowledged as the most progressive organization in the most socially conscious American sports league. For years, being an informed citizen has been a prerequisite of playing for the Spurs. But it has become imperative this season, which begins

later this month, weeks before the U.S. presidential election, at a time of extraordinary racial and political tension across the country.

One reminder came last week when Popovich was asked about the national anthem protest of San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick. The same coach who is famously gruff during in-game television interviews offered [thoughtful comments on race and privilege](#) that were [widely praised for their eloquence](#). He stressed understanding and empathy over ideology and demagoguery, and he insisted the conversation in America needed to persist before there could be any solutions. What he said was particularly notable because of who said it: not a black athlete but a powerful 67-year-old white coach.

The tenor of this election cycle hasn't done much to inspire him. Popovich spoke out during Spurs' media day on the morning of the first presidential debate. After the first 2012 debate, Popovich gave his players DVD copies to watch. He did not subject them to the same exercise this year. Popovich found the first debate incredibly disheartening. Then he tried to watch the vice-presidential debate and couldn't get through the whole thing.

"I worry that maybe I'm being a little too pessimistic, but I'm beginning to have a harder time believing that we are not Rome," he said. "Rome didn't fall in 20 days or 30 years. It took a couple hundred years. The question is: Are we in that process and we don't even know it? I really am starting to think about that. It's not just the two candidates. It's the way the whole thing is being treated."

The Spurs try to exchange ideas, especially about race, in more substantive ways. In last year's training camp, they hosted John Carlos, the Olympian who raised his fist on the medal stand in 1968. During the season, they scored tickets to the Broadway show "Hamilton," and they had a private screening of "Chi-Raq," the film by Spike Lee, who answered questions from the players and then joined them for dinner.

This year, when they arrived at training camp, they received copies of the Ta-Nehisi Coates book "Between the World and Me" and previewed "The Birth of a Nation," the new film about Nat Turner's slave rebellion. The Spurs were so moved that they sat silent through the entire credits sequence, Popovich said. He expected they would talk about it on their own the next day.

"I think it's important for their lives, for their kids, their wives, for our basketball team," he said. "Everybody's gotta get engaged with this elephant in the room that we all have to deal with, but nobody really wants to. People are, like, tired of it. Is it race again? Do we have to talk about it? Well, the reason we do is because it's still the elephant in the room. Because it still has never been taken care of. Because it's still there."

What's most remarkable isn't that Popovich is one of the few people in sports to speak about such issues sensibly. It's that, at this point, it was almost expected of him. People slap "[Popovich for President](#)" bumper stickers on their cars here because of his reputation for being utterly reasonable.

"If I just did basketball, I'd be bored to death," said the coach with five titles spread over three

decades. “How much satisfaction can you get out of doing jump shots and teaching someone to deny in the passing lanes? OK, that’s cool, that’s my job, that’s how I earn my living, and I have a good living and I enjoy it. But I’m not a lifer. It doesn’t define me. If I win a game, I’m fine. If I lose a game, it hurts, but I’m fine real quick. It’s not that important.”

His perspective has influenced the entire NBA. Popovich’s coaching tree casts a long shadow: More than one third of the league’s teams are now run by coaches or general managers who have spent time in San Antonio and understand the value of their organizational culture. The result is that the Spurs are the team that other teams want to be.

Meanwhile, conversations about politics and race in America are getting louder in the NBA. The sport’s biggest stars, many of whom are hugely influential black men, have become more socially conscious in recent years, and especially recent months.

Their activism coincides with emphatic political statements from the league itself. The most significant one came this summer—not long after Carmelo Anthony, LeBron James, Chris Paul and Dwayne Wade opened the ESPYs with a profound message about violence in the U.S.—when the NBA [moved the All-Star Game out of Charlotte](#) in protest of a controversial North Carolina law.

But the NBA has been socially active in subtler ways under commissioner Adam Silver. Popovich happened to be in New York this summer on the weekend of the city’s gay-pride celebration. He didn’t know the NBA’s top executives would be attending, too, until he saw them in the parade.

“I’m sitting there, and all of a sudden, here comes this float, and I’m like: that’s Adam Silver!” he said. “I just thought that was the greatest thing ever.”

Popovich says there’s a simple reason he wants his players to be engaged citizens: It makes for a fuller life. He believes there are basketball advantages, too. He thinks it makes them want to play with and for each other. “I think it’s sad if a person’s whole self-image and self-worth is based in their job,” he said. “Whether you’re a basketball player, a plumber, a doctor, a mailman or whatever you might be, why not try your best to live a more interesting life that includes other people, other cultures and different worlds?”

The Spurs certainly have. They are loaded with foreign players who tend to follow the news and debate international politics more than anyone else in the locker room. “They like to tell us what’s wrong and right about our country,” said Spurs forward Kyle Anderson.

The Spurs never quite know what Popovich might ask when they show up for work. But the foreign players often have an advantage when their coach tests them “to see who’s paying attention in the world,” as American guard Danny Green put it. Which is why they’re sometimes disqualified from Popovich’s quizzes.

For example, when they were asked where one might be mobbed by wombats, Green was the first to say Australia. That was because Patty Mills, who is actually from Australia, wasn’t

allowed to respond. Neither was Argentine guard Manu Ginobili, but for a different reason: He had gotten the right answer the day before.

“If I were in the fourth-most-sacred Muslim spot in the world, and it was in the city of Harar, what country would I be in?” Popovich said.

Ginobili knew it was Ethiopia. Popovich wasn’t surprised. Ginobili knows the answer to most of Popovich’s questions—and soon there may be data supporting his dominance.

“I’m going to keep a ledger,” Popovich said, “and I’ll see who answered the most.”

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Be Attentive: One explanation of the rise of the coaching profession in business, is that the focus on short-term results and productivity has cost us time to teach and mentor. Who are the people in your work life that cared for you as a person and challenged you to grow as a whole person?

Be Intelligent: Do you take time to teach and coach in the spirit of Coach Popovich or Coach Wooden? With whom? With what affect for you, for your teammates or department? How do you foster engagement around being a good corporate citizen?

Be Reasonable: What defines you as a leader? How do you invite appreciation for your teammates and colleagues? How does individual productivity and short-term results orientation engage the concept of stewardship that Jim Nolan said, “is the cornerstone of the Woodstock Business Conference?”

Be Responsible: How can you use questions of inquiry to heighten the engagement of you subordinates or colleagues? Around what issues would you engage your associates? How will this conversation impact your thoughts and actions this week, this month?

Closing Prayer: St. Francis Peace Prayer

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;
Where there is hatred let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And, where there is sadness, joy;
Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
To be understood, as to understand,
To be loved as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

And that it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end. Amen