



6 December 2024

Dear Merici Community,

### Spes

Our theme for this year was **Spes**. Our symbol for 2024 pointed to the nature of this concept: hope is like a steadfast and calm anchor that gives us courage, composure, stability, joy, positivity and wonder as we move through our lives. There are other symbols that represent Spes: upwards spiral, sunrays peeping from behind a cloud and gleaming light at the rise of the day, eagles soaring, new growth in spring and flower buds. Of course, the most significant symbol of hope in our faith tradition is the cross. This symbol is there for each of us to source courage and wisdom from everyday, in every classroom and in every gathering space here at Merici. We always look to it when we are in need of hope.

Our ribbon colour for 2024 was yellow. It is the colour of hope.

This year, the Merici community has been especially called to be people of hope. We have sought to live Jesus' message of hope and contribute to the building of God's glorious kingdom on earth. His Passion and Resurrection is, at its very essence, a story of hope and unconditional love. Pope Francis says that Christian hope is founded on trusting "that the future is in God's hands." Old Testament scripture, the words Christ used to pray, re-assure us that "The Lord delights in those that...put their hope in his unflinching love." (Psalm 147:11) and that "...those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." (Isaiah 40:31)

This year, we have explored how intimately forgiveness is connected to hope. In fact, to forgive is an act of hope because it shows that all is not lost, even in the midst of painful memories and unresolved hurt. The ability to forgive and the hope that comes from it, sets people free. We've also understood that hope is a human imperative. Our world needs to avoid using the language of violence, despair, bile, vitriol, gossip and innuendo and to speak with love, tenderness and sympathy. We need to use ideas that uplift and rejuvenate, encourage and express solidarity. We have sourced the wisdom words of our poets, prophets, saints and storytellers. This year, we have worked to listen and internalise hope, hear good news and do good things.

### Strategic Plan

It is very appropriate that, in our year of Hope, we have thought deeply about the future and what our young women will need to flourish in the second half of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century! We started our year of strategic planning exploring the future with a community workshop led by a representative of McCrindle, a firm expert in using data to understand our current state and how our society will evolve in the medium to long term.

Following a fascinating 'provocation', students, parents, friends and staff discussed and identified future trends that are relevant to our context. These threads were factored into the development of the 2025-2027 Strategic Plan as was the College's review of what has been achieved through the implementation of the 2022-2024 Strategic Plan.

<b>MERICI COLLEGE</b>	Wise St	GPO Box 154	Telephone (02) 6243 4100	<a href="mailto:principal@merici.act.edu.au">principal@merici.act.edu.au</a>
	Braddon	Canberra	Facsimile (02) 6243 4199	<a href="http://www.merici.act.edu.au">www.merici.act.edu.au</a>
	ACT 2612	ACT 2601		

As a Catholic educational community, we will continue to aspire to:

- Fidelitas, Strong Faith: Build a strong and positive Catholic Identity, where faith is nurtured and all are empowered to serve others;
- Powerful Learning: Enrich an educational environment that inspires life-long learning, enabling everyone to achieve individual excellence;
- Thriving Community: Strengthen a connected community that cultivates compassionate relationships, well-being and the whole person;
- Sustainable Future: Practice ethically to ensure shared responsibility for the stewardship of all resources.

The Merici College Strategic Plan 2025-2027 was launched at the Community Council Open Forum on Tuesday 12 November, 2024.

The College is proud of what has been achieved in 2024 in terms of the Annual Improvement goals as aligned to the 2022-2024 Strategic Plan. These are the:

- alignment of faith formation experiences to the Pastoral Care program;
- enhancement of our inter-faith room;
- growing connection to first nations peoples and communities;
- making visible IB MYP and DP language and teaching strategies in the classroom;
- successful completion of the IB DP Review;
- training of the fourth wave of Catalyst teachers;
- engagement in the first year of the Classroom Mastery pilot including coaching and mentoring;
- development of a low variance curriculum for Year 7
- expansion of the Virtual Learning program;
- amalgamation of the Merici College VET RTO with CECG RTO;
- well established Community Council and Parents and Friends sub-committee;
- launch of the Merici College Masterplan;
- completion of significant minor works including the Administration and Student Services facility;
- successful transition to Compass Lite and Tech One systems;
- furthering of the College's registration as an ACT Sustainable school;
- exciting action in terms of the Biodiversity Project and Global Warming at Merici College.

### **Uniform Shop Holiday Trading Hours 2024/2025**

We are pleased to advise that the Merici College Uniform Shop will be offering extended hours to meet your uniform requirements for 2025.

If you wish to visit the shop for a fitting, the extended hours are as follows:

1. Wednesday 11 December 2:00pm-5:00pm – Drop in
2. Wednesday 22 January 8:00am-1:00pm – Drop in
3. Thursday 23 January 8:00am-1:00pm – Appointments only
4. Friday 24 January 1:00pm-5:00pm – Appointments only
5. Tuesday 28 January 8:00am-1:00pm – Drop In

These times are in addition to usual trading hours of Tuesdays 8:00am-11:00am and Thursdays 3:00pm-5:00pm during the school term. You are more than welcome to visit the shop at these times. No appointment necessary.

Parents are strongly encouraged to use the online ordering system as the preferred option for supply, including part orders for Click and Collect. Garments can be returned due to incorrect sizes but please ensure that items have not been worn and tags attached.

For new families, please follow the link below to find instructions on how to set up a new account. Accessing the Uniform New Family Account. Please make a note of your login information.

<https://shop.merici.act.edu.au/MonitorOnline/app/#/login>

### **Online Booking Portal**

Please book appointments at this link:

<https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/UniformShop@merici.onmicrosoft.com/bookings/>

Once you have gone to the link, you need to click on the date you want and scroll to the date that is listed above.

Please visit <https://www.merici.act.edu.au/resources/uniforms/> to find information on all uniform requirements.

### **College Celebrations**

This term has seen a number of services and celebrations for the students in their different year groups. Year 12 students attended a moving Graduation Mass at St Christopher's Cathedral and a special Graduation Dinner and Awards Ceremony. We are eagerly anticipating a fantastic celebration with Year 12 students and their families at the Formal, set to take place at the National Museum of Australia. The night promises to be magnificent, culminating in a spirited rendition of the College Song! Recently, we held a heartfelt Advent Mass and Social for our Year 10 students, along with beautiful Advent Liturgies for our Year 7-9 students. As the year draws to a close, we look forward to recognizing the academic achievements of our students in Years 7, 8, 9, and 11.

To my staff, I thank you for your support and constant care of our students. I am so grateful for the welcome, trust and dedication of the College staff who make my role exciting and do-able! As several staff are moving to promotional positions, retiring, looking forward to new horizons or moving interstate or retiring, I would like to personally thank you for your professionalism and commitment to educating our young women and contributing to the life of Merici College. I wish you an abundance of happiness and peace in all you do in the future.

Thank you to the members of the College Community Council and P&F Committee, especially to the Council Chair, Anne-Marie Cooper, for your support, humour, wisdom and your time, which you all give so freely.

To our parents and carers, I value the partnership we share in educating your daughters and thank you for your support. I appreciated your warm words and encouraging emails.

We are looking forward to 2025 with the College theme *Joy*, with building renovations continuing, the continued growth of our International Baccalaureate Diploma and Middle Years Programme and many exciting programs and offerings in the curriculum and extra-curricular area.

For those moving within the ACT or moving interstate or overseas - we hold a strong belief that the education you have received at Merici and the time you have spent here has put you in good stead for whatever path you have chosen. Never be a stranger to us and know that you will always be loved as a member of the Merici College family.

If you are leaving our community, can you please contact our Enrolments Officer soon as possible so that we can contact prospective families who would like to join us in 2024 and who are on our waiting lists.

The 2025 school year will begin for Years 7, 11, 12 and new students on Tuesday 4 February and for Years 8, 9 and 10 on Wednesday 5 February. During the week prior to this, staff professional learning, new staff orientation, and staff planning will take place. Our school calendar is available online for you to check important upcoming dates for all year groups. [Access our School Calendar](#).

In a year of courage, compassion, care, challenge and community, I would like to conclude by sharing, once again, an extract from a beautiful blessing by John O'Donohue.

### A Morning Offering

May my mind come alive today  
To the invisible geography  
That invites me to new frontiers  
To break the dead shell of yesterdays,  
To risk being disturbed and changed.

May I have the courage today  
To live the life that I would love,  
To postpone my dream no longer,  
But do at last what I came here for  
And waste my heart on fear no more.

With my best wishes for a very happy, safe and holy Christmas and New Year season. Cherish being with those you love and enjoy being people of hope.



Anna Masters  
Principal