

December 2025

Dear Merici Community,

Joy

Each of our non-negotiable College values, Fidelitas, Integritas, Communitas and Spes, are integral to our theme for this year, Joy.

As the children of God, we are meant to grow in joy and so experience one of the fruits of spirit-filled lives. Searching for and finding the great values of humanity, the transcendentals: truth, goodness and beauty, gives rise to moments of lasting joy. C.S. Lewis says, "joy is the serious business of heaven."

We have been on the serious business of heaven in our year of Joy, 2025.

In 2025, God has called us to be open to new things, goodness, the truth of our beliefs and, of course, beauty in all that we encounter and in the everyday. Our symbol for 2025, the rose, and the colour pink pointed to beauty, love, passion and sacrifice. Pink was the colour associated with Jesus by medieval painters and illustrators. In the 21st Century, we connected it with compassion, friendship, nurture, good health, comfort, warmth, femininity, the rights of women and unconditional love. It is a colour that has evoked joy and happiness.

We have explored the idea of joy. Part of our delving into the meaning of joy was to turn to great spiritual figures of the 20th Century, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. In their work we found wisdom and enlightenment. What did we learn from their conversations about joy?

Firstly, that joy, the feeling of lasting delight, rejoicing enchantment and spiritual radiance resides in the mind and heart. It cannot be found in the pursuit of a goal or achievement, it does not reside in fortune or fame. Secondly, we learnt that joy is our birthright, it is even more fundamental to us than happiness which can be so dependent on external things. Thirdly, we found that when we seek to do good for others, we open ourselves up to the experience of joy. UBUNTU told us that "a person is a person through other persons," or, "I am because we are." The more we turned towards others in 2025, the more joy we experienced, and the more joy we experienced, the more joy we can brought to others. We aimed to take Tutu's advice "to be a reservoir of joy, an oasis of peace, a pool of serenity that can ripple out to all those around you."

Thus, we aimed to be joy-filled human beings, even in the face of loneliness, suffering, injustice, fear, sadness, grief and despair.

Scripture guided us. Jesus said: "I tell you these things that my joy might be in you, so that your joy might be full." (Jn 15:11) St Paul wrote to the Phillipians, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" One of the most prominent themes in the most ancient texts of our tradition, joy is present in scripture from the story of our beginning in Genesis. God's plan for us has always been to bring joy and peace to all of creation. As members of the Merici community, we were constantly reminded this year that we are loved unconditionally, that we are precious.

We knew that God wanted us to be filled with life and goodness and laughter – and joy. God wanted us to flourish, to be filled with joy and excitement and to find what is beautiful in God's creation: the compassion, the caring and the sharing.

Joy is part of who we are as human beings, a gift from God to his beloved creatures. 2025 has reminded us that joy is elemental, beautiful, good, truthful and transcendental.

Strategic Plan

The College is proud of what has been achieved in 2025 in terms of the Annual Improvement goals as aligned to the 2025-2027 Strategic Plan. Some of these are the:

- Establishment of regular Masses for students, staff and our community, focusing on specific themes aligned with Feast Days;
- Realignment of the Christian Service-Learning Programme (CSLP) with the Middle years Programme (MYP);
- Ensuring compliance with accreditation requirements for 'Working, Teaching and Leading in a Catholic School';
- Being classed as a Transformative School by CYSMI;
- Embedding and scaling High Impact Teaching Practices in every classroom;
- Completing Phase 1 of building a low variance, knowledge rich curriculum;
- Achieving a successful 5 year review and registration of the College's Middle Years program;
- Proactively educating students on careers pathways;
- Refinement and extension of staff leadership programs;
- Embedding Classroom Mastery in every classroom;
- Developing a tiered behaviour management approach;
- Using holistically, student data on SEQTA to inform student pastoral care and wellbeing;
- Building our partnership with parents through an ongoing seminar program;
- Completing Pre- Masterplan stages with Phase One in design process;
- Reviewing iC facilities and programs with recommendations to be implemented in 2026;
- Achieving 3 Stars in the ACT Schools Sustainability audit and review project.

Achievements

2025 saw so many moments of joy, for individuals but also for our community:

- the golden summer's day for the Swimming Carnival;
- the unique faithful and musical presence of Fr. Rob Galea at our Opening Mass;
- brand new classrooms looking out onto the green of our oval;
- strong women and men gathering for International Women's Day;
- student ambassadors showing their College to prospective families every Talk and Tour morning;
- 15 new chooks happily roosting in the Kitchen Garden;
- Sausages sizzling and balloons rising at dawn as many walked for the Gift of Life campaign;
- Walking the boundaries of the Biodiversity project to see smaller birds and wildlife starting to make our grounds their home;
- Seeing so many involved at our autumnal Athletics Carnival;
- Excited young faces at Be A Merici Girls for a Day events;
- Proud alumni gathering with students and staff to support the Dr. Rose McGready Foundation;
- Warm hugs and meaningful notes at our special events for mothers, grandparent and fathers;
- St. Angela Merici Day Mass and events: sparkling weather, reflective awardees and so many fun activities;
- The Soiree celebrating the wonderful 40 years' service of Mr. Gerard Ryan;
- Witnessing, with pride the expertise of our staff as they were interviewed and filmed by the Australian Educational Research organisation (AERO);
- The explosion of pink, talent and energy in the sell-out performances of Legally Blond Jnr;
- Community bonhomie at the most successful Trivia Night yet to be held;
- A classy costume parade for Book Week;

- The Dance Troupe wowing their amongst the tulips at Floriade.
- This year, the College supported 50 years of organ donation in the Territory and hosted the ACT Government's DonateLife Week 2020 Launch. For us at Merici, this event was especially moving, as we remembered our Merici sister, Annette Taylor who was the ACT's first organ donor. Her decision to become an organ donor changed the lives of two people and paved the way for countless life-saving donations over the past five decades. At the launch, Minister for Health Rachel Stephen-Smith announced that the ACT Government has named a street in the suburb of Macnamara 'Annette Street', in honour of Annette.

Uniform Shop Holiday Trading Hours 2025/26

We are pleased to advise that the Merici College Uniform Shop will be offering extended hours to meet your uniform requirements for 2026.

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

1. Thursday 27 November 4-6pm by appointment
2. Thursday 4 December 4-6pm by appointment
3. Saturday 6 December 11am-3pm by appointment
4. Saturday 13 December 11am-3pm by appointment
5. Wednesday 21 January 9am-3:30pm by appointment
6. Thursday 22 January 9am-3:30pm by appointment
7. Friday 23 Jan 9am-3:30pm by appointment
8. Thursday 29 Jan 9am-3:30pm by appointment
9. Friday 30 January 9am-3:30pm Drop in

These times are in addition to usual trading hours during the school term of Tuesdays 8-11am and Thursdays 3-5pm. Please note however that the shop will only be open on Tuesday mornings until Tuesday 9 December. 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>.

Please use the link below to make a booking. If you have more than one child to be fitted for a uniform, please make two (2) appointments. Please be aware that there could be a considerable wait on the drop-in day on Friday January 30. **Please book appointments at this link:**

<https://outlook.office.com/book/UniformShop@merici.onmicrosoft.com/?ismsaljsauthenabed>

After opening the link, click the dates at the top and then select one of the listed options. Once you have gone to the link, you need to click on the dates at the top, then select one the dates that is listed.

Please see below a list of uniform items that you will need to purchase as a suggested minimum. You can purchase these items all at the same time on the day or space it out over a few weeks. At your fitting, you will be given your daughter's sizes to record.

Please click [here](#) to find our current itemised price list.

- School Dress and/or Tailored Shorts and Blouse
- Jumper (can be purchased later if wanted to)
- Blazer (Compulsory)
- Sports Polo
- Sports Shorts
- Backpack
- Hat/Cap

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 2026 with the College theme *Fidelitas*, 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 2026 school year will begin for Years 7, 11, 12 and new students on Monday 2 February and for Years 8, 9 and 10 on Tuesday 3 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](#).

For so many, joy chose us in 2025 because we were open to receiving God's gift of joy.

The following poem by Donna Ashworth speaks to joy and the surprises God graces us with in the most unexpected moments.

Joy Chose You by Donna Ashworth
*Joy does not arrive with a fanfare
on a red carpet strewn
with the flowers of a perfect life
joy sneaks in
as you pour a cup of coffee
watching the sun
hit your favourite tree
just right
and you usher joy away
because you are not ready for her
your house is not as it should be
for such a distinguished guest
but joy, you see
cares nothing for your messy home,
or your bank balance
or your waistline
joy is supposed to slither through
the cracks of your imperfect life
that's how joy works
you cannot truly invite her
you can only be ready
when she appears
and hug her with meaning
because in this very moment
joy chose you.*

I am deeply grateful that 2026 has been a wonderful year, tinged with pink and sparkling with moments of Joy.

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 joy.



Anna Masters
Principal