



DATE DOWNLOADED: Fri Nov 4 13:50:38 2022

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Citations:

Bluebook 21st ed.

Eugene R. Milhizer 1 AVE MARIA INT'L J. i (2011).

ALWD 7th ed.

Eugene R. Milhizer, , 1 Ave Maria Int'l L.J. i (2011).

APA 7th ed.

Milhizer, E. R. (2011). Ave Maria International Law Journal, 1(1), i-iii.

Chicago 17th ed.

Eugene R. Milhizer, ", " Ave Maria International Law Journal 1, no. 1 (Fall 2011):  
i-iii

AGLC 4th ed.

Eugene R. Milhizer, " (2011) 1(1) Ave Maria International Law Journal i

OSCOLA 4th ed.

Eugene R. Milhizer, " (2011) 1 Ave Maria Int'l LJ i

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LETTER FROM EUGENE R. MILHIZER

DEAN AND PRESIDENT,

AVE MARIA SCHOOL OF LAW

The inaugural edition of the *Ave Maria School of Law International Law Journal* is at once a unique and important contribution to the legal community, and the next milestone in our advancement as a law school. It is indeed a blessing that both of these ambitious objectives can be achieved in one event. I will briefly explain what I mean by this.

Law schools today produce about 650 law reviews and secondary publications of all sorts. Over 100 of these journals are devoted to international law and related topics. These statistics reflect that legal scholarship is definitely plentiful and no doubt diverse. None of these existing journals, however, are dedicated to publishing scholarship that considers international legal issues from the perspective of the natural law and the Catholic intellectual tradition. This will be the unique and singularly important contribution of our *International Law Journal*. As our Journal's founding documents explain, this publication will be "[e]ver mindful of international law's foundational concept of *jus cogens*, and [it] recognize[s] the Catholic Church's contribution to its development." In light of this historical reality, "the *Ave Maria International Law Journal* endeavors to continue the contribution of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition in the development of International Law."

Besides being unique, our Journal's focus on the natural law and the Catholic intellectual tradition is fundamental and indispensable. Natural law is the foundational source of all law. This includes international law, which is inseparable from Catholic tradition and its underlying Judeo-Christian viewpoint. Notable examples of the profound influence of Catholic thought in international realm include the Augustinian origins of the just war theory and the development of modern diplomacy. Looking to the future, Catholic thinking has much to contribute to the wide array of contemporary global issues such as nuclear proliferation, state-sponsored terrorism, the protection of women and children, immigration and freedom to travel, racial and religious hostility and discrimination, political self-

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determination movements, and widespread financial crises. These and other international concerns cannot be adequately considered absent a proper appreciation of basic concepts such as human dignity and the common good, and without reference to the treasure trove of sophisticated Catholic thinking about specific global matters. In a post-modern age where might makes right, and where moral relativism and a conscious rejection of religious tradition hold sway, our *International Law Journal* will give voice to an authentic Catholic perspective so that it may engage in the debate and influence decisions and policy.

While these are ambitious goals, they are no grander than the vision that led to the creation of Ave Maria School of Law. Our law school's Mission Statement beautifully expresses this vision.

Ave Maria School of Law is a Catholic law school dedicated to educating lawyers with the finest professional skills. Inspired by Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, Ave Maria School of Law offers a distinctive legal education – an education characterized by the harmony of faith and reason. Formed by outstanding professional training and a distinctive educational philosophy, Ave Maria's graduates are equipped for leading positions in law firms, corporate legal offices, the judiciary, and national, state, and local government.

Ave Maria School of Law offers an outstanding legal education in fidelity to the Catholic Faith, as expressed through Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture, and the teaching authority of the Church. University legal education began in Catholic universities, and Catholic law schools have been the bearers of a tradition that safeguards the dignity of the human person and the common good. Ave Maria School of Law affirms Catholic legal education's traditional emphasis on the only secure foundation for human freedom – the natural law written on the heart of every human being. We affirm the need for society to rediscover those human and moral truths that flow from the nature of the human person and that safeguard human freedom.

Since its founding little more than a decade ago, and consistent with this vision, Ave Maria School of Law has achieved an outstanding record of accomplishment. The school rapidly obtained full accreditation by the American Bar Association, built an outstanding faculty of teachers and scholars, and attracted a cadre of

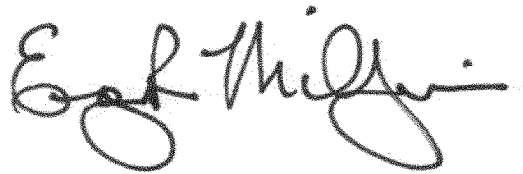
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pioneering students. In the law school's third year, with the publication of the first edition of the *Ave Maria Law Review* in 2003, we began our scholarly engagement with the American legal community about the American legal culture. The results have surpassed our most optimistic hopes, as our Law Review has quickly distinguished itself as a journal of excellence and consequence.

During the summer of 2009, the school accomplished a successful and unprecedented relocation from Ann Arbor, Michigan, to Naples, Florida. Today Ave Maria enjoys record enrollment, boasts several hundred alumni, is financially self-sufficient, and attracts unprecedented support from the broader community. Now in our eleventh year, and with the launching of the *International Law Journal*, our school has taken the next step in its institutional journey as we transcend American legal culture and offer the same, authentically Catholic perspective to matters of universal concern. In this regard, the *International Law Journal* represents a milestone in our school's maturation and advancement. I would also note that all of the students who will work on the Journal's inaugural issue have matriculated since our relocation to Florida.

In closing, I recall the words of Blessed Pope John Paul II, who said, "Down the centuries, the teaching of the Church, drawing upon the philosophical and theological reflection of many Christian thinkers, has made a significant contribution in directing international law to the common good of the whole human family." It is with great anticipation and humility that we will seek, through our *International Law Journal*, to join in this noble effort.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. J. Miller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and a long, sweeping underline.

October 17, 2011