

# POPE SPARKS CONTROVERSY

Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si*, ignited quite a reaction among fans and foes alike. The irony of seeing traditional enemies of the Catholic Church now hail the pope, even to the point of insisting that Catholic politicians take their marching orders from Rome, was amusing.

The pope painted a bleak picture saying that the earth "is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth." At one point he asked that we reject "doomsday predictions," yet later he said, "Doomsday predictions can no longer be met with irony or disdain."

Bill Donohue defended the right of the pope to address this issue, noting that other popes had also addressed environmental issues, though none were anywhere near as specific. When conservative radio talk-show host Michael Savage called the pope the "Anti-Christ," Donohue called him out for his "disparaging" remarks. Donohue also took aim at those on the left.

The *New York Times*, Donohue said, "normally loves church-state separation," but not this time: it implored governments around the world to adhere to the pope's call. "Sadly," the *Times* said, "the encyclical, compelling as it is, is unlikely to have a similarly positive effect on American politics." Donohue couldn't hold back. "This is a keeper," he said. "Never before have I read an editorial by the *Times* saying how sad it is that agents of the state are not taking their cues from the pope."

Look for this issue to spark more controversy in the fall.