News



From left: Dr. Thomas Wallace; Albrecht von Boeselager, grand chancellor of the Order of Malta; and Jesuit Fr. Francisco Javier Diaz Diaz at the Order of Malta Clinic of Northern California in Oakland (CNS/Catholic Voice/Albert C. Pacciorni)



by Dan Morris-Young

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"Don't cuss. Dress modestly. Recycle" are the "rules" at the Detroit soup kitchen founded by Blessed Solanus Casey during the Great Depression and still feeding those in need today. The Capuchin priest was beatified on Nov. 18.

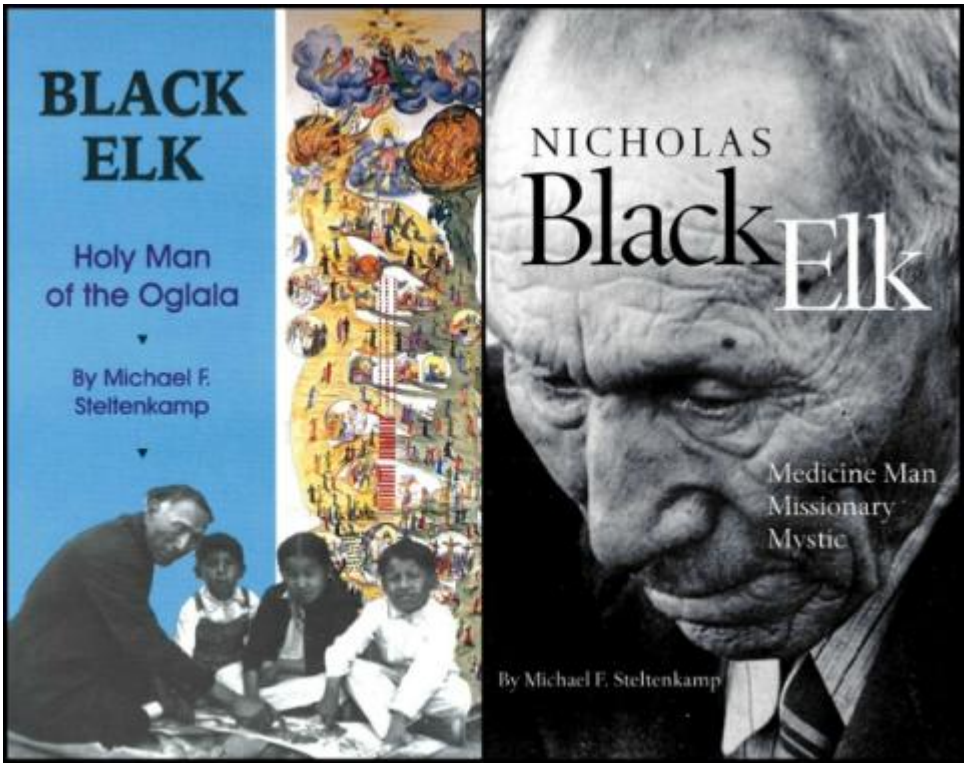
Speaking of feeding the hungry: St. Vincent de Paul Society members across the country have been gearing up to address the increased demand they experience at Thanksgiving.

The Catholic Legal Immigration Network Inc. provides a wide range of programs, training and education on the rights of immigrants and how to build grassroots efforts on their behalf.

A priest and a physician, Jesuit Francisco Javier Diaz Diaz recently joined the staff of both the Order of Malta Clinic of Northern California and the Christ the Light Cathedral in Oakland where the clinic is housed. More than 25,000 have received free medical care at the clinic since it opened nine years ago. A native of Costa Rica, Diaz describes a lifelong tug between the vocations of priesthood and doctor.

The Oakland cathedral campus is also home to the free Pope Francis Legal Clinic.

Reaction to the recent Field Hospital roundup report on the Oct. 21 official launch of the canonization cause of Nicholas Black Elk has drawn reader recommendations for additional background on the well-known Lakota Native American spiritual leader, who lived from circa 1863-1886 to 1950.




The covers of two books about Nicholas Black Elk by Jesuit Fr. Michael Steltenkamp

Divine Providence Sr. Marie-Rose Messingschlager, longtime director of Indian Ministry for the Diocese of Duluth, Minnesota, as well as David Hammond, a teacher in the online theology program at St. Joseph's College of Maine, laud the work of Jesuit Fr. Michael Steltenkamp, a Black Elk biographer and professor of theology at Wheeling Jesuit University in West Virginia.

The priest is author of *Black Elk: Holy Man of the Oglala* (1997) and *Nicholas Black Elk: Medicine Man, Missionary, Mystic* (2009).

In a recent essay, Steltenkamp himself mentions two other books — *Black Elk Speaks* (1932) by John G. Neihardt and *The Sacred Pipe: Black Elk's Account of the Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux* (1953), edited by Joseph Epes Brown.

In an email, Messingschlager cautioned that the Neihardt book "completely ignores Black Elk's conversion and his many years as a catechist," during which he is credited with leading "more than 400 converts to Catholicism."

Similarly, Steltenkamp observes that *The Sacred Pipe* focuses "solely on the holy-man's relationship to the Sacred ... unaffected by anything non-Indian (especially religion)."

During his life, Black Elk took part in the defeat of George Custer at the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876, and was reportedly wounded at Wounded Knee in 1890 when some 200 of his people were killed by the Seventh Cavalry. For a time, he toured with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show.

At the time of his conversion to Catholicism in 1904, Black Elk took as his baptismal name "Nicholas." He is often credited for an ability to meld Native American spiritual values and traditions with Catholic ones.

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