

CIM: A Consciousness Raiser

By DICK BAUMBACH

Elmira — "People understand more than they think they do and our program raises the consciousness of the people who come."

Mrs. Irene Navatta, a program official of the unique Christian Institute of Man (CIM) lecture series being run in the Chemung-Schuyler region of the diocese, made the comment on the capabilities of people to understand deep subject matter.

"I have never heard anyone who has come to our series say anything about the talks going over their heads. As I said before if a person just sits and listens to our speakers, who are experts in various fields of religion, they will understand what is being discussed," Mrs. Navatta said.

Mrs. Navatta who serves with Mrs. Marge Nureberg as program official for CIM said the project was started "because we felt there was a need for a program of this caliber in our area. What many of us wanted was a program that offered a little more than was offered by religious education programs sponsored by local parishes."

Mrs. Navatta said that when the Christian Formation Board (CFB) was formed, the idea of having a specialized religious education program was born.

Then as the CFB started to wind down some of its activities several Elmira members of the CFB came up with a program to put the CIM series into use.

The CIM series has now been in operation for several seasons

during the fall and winter months.

Mrs. Navatta explained what CIM is, saying, "What we do is to get experts in certain fields, like this year we are dealing with technology as it concerns religion, and have them come to impart their knowledge to us."

The CIM series is conducted at the Park Church in Elmira and is an ecumenical project.

The programs are offered once a week with a break over the holiday season.

Mrs. Navatta said the CIM programs also aim at showing "the Church in the world can no longer sit in isolation and let the world go by. We can't be like ostriches in our religion. We have to be aware of what's happening in the world."

The program is open to all wish to attend with a small donation requested. That donation along with monies provided by individual sponsors and churches participating in the project go to offset the fees charged by the speakers.

Mrs. Navatta said the speakers are paid minimum fees because they realize "we don't have the funds to pay the much higher fees they usually demand. Also the speakers themselves have become very much interested in our program."

Mrs. Navatta said the entire CIM program is under the chairmanship this year of Mrs. Elaine Caso.

Mrs. Navatta said the overseer of the project is Father Thomas Berry of Fordham University. Father Berry helped developed

the CIM series and works through area people on the project.

Mrs. Navatta said the CIM series "shows the need for people to become involved; and it does this by feeding them a little deeper understanding of religion, allowing them to grow and to be of more service to their respective churches."

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