

### **FIRST FRIDAY COLLECTION**

The First Friday Collection at the noon mass originated with the parish Sacred Heart Sodality, which collected among its members for a Sacred Heart Mission school in Sideia, PNG. Fifty years ago, a boarding school – which became known as “Hotel Sideia” – was opened, by Father John McGhee MSC, because the potential students lived mainly on outlying islands and daily attendance was impossible. Financing the boarding school was difficult and Father John, a long-time principal, enlisted support from friends, relatives and, no doubt, Sacred Heart Sodalities. In the sixties and seventies each Box Hill sodality member contributed twenty cents a month, which went into a red bag, and records from the time show that \$40.00 was sent each year to support a particular student. It was the Sacred Heart Sodality which began the “Hour of Prayer for Priests”, which included midday mass, on First Fridays in the seventies and during the Hour the red bag went round the members for their contributions; very soon, other members of the congregation offered donations. In the late eighties the sodality lapsed but the Hour of Prayer for Priests was continued by Fr. Ben as a “Holy Hour”; we have exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, we continue to pray for our priests and the red bag collection has continued, with the help of Imelda Bianco, Ivan Mahlstedt and Judy Reid and many generous contributors. Our contributions to "Hotel Sideia" are very gratefully received, as the families in the area have difficulty earning the money to pay for their children's education. There must now be many people in PNG who owe their position in life to the schooling they received at “Hotel Sideia”.

The total collected for the financial year ending June 2010 was \$1,536.35 The total for this year (to March) is \$1,823 05. The money is put directly into the Mission bank account, so no expenses are incurred.

Imelda, Ivan, Judy.