

REVIEW

# On the Edge



**On the Edge** is a new direction for Centro Santa Chiara, which up to now has been responsible for making documentaries about Chiara Lubich and the various activities of the Focolare Movement.

On the Edge is a DVD containing the stories of three individuals and their encounters with Jesus crucified and forsaken. It is a work of art directed by a new Brazilian

film maker: Heraldo De Souza and filmed by Lorenzo Giovanetti. It is quite minimalist in style, filmed beautifully in black and white. The stillness of each character and the simplicity of the set enhances the harrowing nature of each of the stories recounted. There is just one small area of colour for each story: a

**Paul Gateshill** reviews a new DVD produced by Centro Santa Chiara about three people and their encounters with suffering and marginalisation.

red lamp in the first story, red keys in the second and finally, red roses. Each of these symbols help to reinforce each of the stories told.

The first film is entitled ‘Condemned’ and is acted by Alessio De Caprio in Italian, with English subtitles. It is about a man’s experience of contracting HIV aids – of initial feelings of horror, guilt, alienation, confusion before finally identifying himself with Jesus abandoned and rejected on the cross.

The second film entitled: ‘Trapped’, portrays a man who has been manipulated into an unhealthy gay relationship and feels helpless in the face of the abuse of power in this relationship. He is played by Rafael Reyner Loyo in Spanish, with subtitles in English:

*“A school friend who had lots of problems and great need for affection asked me to be his friend. It never entered my mind that his intentions were more than friendship. I didn’t even notice when he complained I wasn’t giving him enough attention and I had to prove my love for him. At the beginning it was just teasing – like a*



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Sarah Finch, on set,  
together with director  
Heraldo De Souza

game. Then he started threatening to take his own life if I didn't reciprocate. This went on for months, years..."

The final film is called 'Desperate' and is played by Sarah Finch in English. It tells of a married woman with a beautiful family, but who is drowning in a sea of depression and seeks to end her own life:

*"The water was a good ten metres drop below me. It was the end of summer and the sun was sparkling on the surface. I gathered all my strength to do what I had come to do. Then a picture shot into my mind: a summer evening near the sea, with the family sitting around the table, the kids full of life, each one more beautiful than the next. The youngest one was smiling and asking me for a kiss.*

*I stopped. I couldn't do it. I just couldn't. I wept. In that moment I felt I was being hugged by heaven..."*

There is no hint of sentimentality in this series of films. The stories are allowed to speak for themselves. Sarah Finch commented: 'It is so much more powerful to have real stories than just fiction. Somehow having the words verbatim from real individuals brings an added weight to the drama...' In between each scene there is footage of the remarkable Italian artist Roberto Cipollone (Ciro) at work on his extraordinary sculptures made from reclaimed wood and metal. Superimposed on these scenes of the artist at work are short meditations by Chiara Lubich on Jesus forsaken:

*'We are tired Lord  
So tired under the cross  
And every little cross that appears  
Makes the larger ones seem  
Impossible to carry...'*

*'But when the soul, which has abandoned itself to God, has for some time made the law of "believing in love" its own, God shows himself.*

*With newly opened eyes the soul sees that from every trial it gathers new fruit, every fight is followed by victory, every tear flowers in a smile that is new, always new, because God is life...'*

'On the edge' is a powerful meditation on the nature of suffering, the fragility of the human condition and then the healing power of Jesus crucified and forsaken, who identifies himself with every human being, whatever their circumstance. I can see it being a useful resource for 'word of life' groups or general prayer or bible study groups. It is available in either English, Italian or Spanish. 

**On the edge (DVD)** is available from New City (English version).  
Cost £10