



Centro Monseñor Romero honors the famous liberation theologian.

liberation theologian and national hero Archbishop Óscar Romero, who was assassinated because of his opposition to El Salvador's military dictatorship.

On March 4, 1980, Romero was giving Mass at the Capilla de la Divina Providencia in northeastern San Salvador when a lone gunman entered the chapel and shot the archbishop dead in front of his congregation. Rooms inside the Centro Monseñor Romero are filled with historic photographs and floor-to-ceiling glass cases displaying memorabilia that include Romero's vestments and personal effects.

Brave the hubbub of downtown for its landmarks.

This small museum also honors six Jesuit priests plus their maid and her daughter who were slaughtered at the Centro Monseñor Romero by the Salvadoran army in 1989. The rear courtyard where four of the priests' bodies were found has been turned into a tranquil, memorial rose garden. Photo albums piled on a table in one of the center's rooms contain horrific images of the murder victims. Some of the corpses had been so badly mutilated that they were no longer recognizable as human beings.

Gruesome as they are, these images are evidence of how far El Salvador has come since its brutal, twelve-year-long civil war ended in 1992.

MEMORY AND TRUTH

It is worth braving the hubbub of downtown San Salvador to have a peek at some of the city's historic landmarks.

The Metropolitan Cathedral facing Plaza Barrios was a work-in-progress for decades. The cathedral has now been



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completely renovated and has brightly colored murals by Llort decorating its facade. Romero's remains are entombed in the cathedral's east wing.

The neoclassical National Palace behind the cathedral was constructed in 1905. Statues of Christopher Columbus and Queen Isabella I of Spain preside over the palace's main entrance.

East of the cathedral stands the National Theater, another restored neoclassical-style edifice dating back to the early 20th century. Sumptuous red velvet, gilt trimmings and murals adorn its opulent interior.

Parque Cuscatlán, a tree-shaded expanse not far from the historic city center, also merits a visit. The Sala Nacional de Exposiciones on the park's north side hosts temporary art exhibits, but the park's pièce de résistance is the Monumento a la Memoria y la Verdad, or Monument to Memory and Truth, next to the exhibition gallery. Built in 2003, this 278-foot-long wall lists the names of over 25,000 victims of the repression and civil war that haunted El Salvador from the 1970s until the early 1990s. Walking beside the black granite monument scanning the seemingly endless names of the dead and the disappeared is a moving way to end a visit to this beleaguered but resilient city.

IF YOU GO

WHERE TO STAY:

A quiet and safe neighborhood to stay in is the Boulevard de los Héroes area, which has a number of reasonably priced guesthouses and restaurants. Highly recommendable is the comfortable and friendly **Hotel Tazumal House** (Final 35 Ave. Norte 3, Tel.: 2235-2506, www.hotel tazumalhouse.com). The nearby **International Guest House** (35a Ave. Norte 9, Tel.: 2266-7343) and the **El Torogoz Casa de Huéspedes** (35a Ave. Norte 6 & 7, Tel.: 2235-4172) are two other good options if the Hotel Tazumal is full.

WHERE TO EAT: Salvatore's Pizzería y Pastas (35a Ave. Norte 10, Tel.: 2226-5574) near the Hotel Tazumal serves decent Italian food. **Sol y Luna** (at the corner of Blvd. Universitario and Avenida C, Tel.: 2225-6637) is a pleasant lunch place specializing in vegetarian fare. There are also numerous cafes, bars and restaurants on nearby Calle San Antonio Abad. One of the more popular restaurants is **La Ventana** (corner of Calle San Antonio Abad and Avenida San José, Tel.: 2226-5129).

WHAT TO DO: **The Museo Nacional de Antropología David J. Guzmán** (Avenida de la Revolución, Tel.: 2243-3927) is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday (closed Mondays). Admission is \$3. **The Museo de Arte de El Salvador** (Final Avenida de la Revolución, Tel.: 2243-6099, www.marte.org.sv) is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday (closed Mondays). Admission is \$1.50. **The Centro Monseñor Romero** on the campus of the Universidad Centroamericana (Tel.: 2210-6675) is open from 8 a.m. to noon and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, and from 8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Saturday. Admission is free.

GETTING AROUND:

San Salvador's complicated public bus system can be confusing. Taxis, which are relatively cheap and plentiful, are usually the best way to get around.



Two Salvadoran girls examine the Monument to Memory and Truth.



The Metropolitan Cathedral in downtown San Salvador

Family Matters

Dr. Marc Ehrlich



Mental management

The curious part about the thinking patterns we exhibit is that we are often unaware that we are thinking in the first place

One of the many sayings about golf – and my personal favorite – suggests that: “Golf is 95 percent mental ... and 5 percent mental.”

If you have ever played golf, you will quickly agree that once you learn the techniques of the swing and course management, the game is all in the head.

And so, too, with other sports. Champions have “mental toughness.” They focus so intently that they become immune to any distractions that might surface into awareness. The rest of us mortals have to find a way of managing the mental side of the game.

The mind produces a mostly incessant flow of thoughts. I have found that we can categorize thoughts in the following way:

1. **Speculative.** This type of thinking is used to wonder about something we might do, could have done, should have done or wish we had done. Speculative thinking includes trying to “redo” an event from the past (creating feelings of guilt, remorse, regret and anger) or worrying about what might happen in the future.
2. **Rehearsal.** This thinking is used to prepare us for an upcoming interaction that generates anxiety. By rehearsing, we attempt to generate some sense of control over a situation. Rehearsal is also used to ensure that we do not forget important information.
3. **Remembering.** The mind replays experiences that were either positive or negative. When the experience was traumatic, remembering will frequently deteriorate into obsessing.
4. **Daydreaming.** The mind generates pleasant fantasies about highly desired events.
5. **Self-criticism.** This stream of thoughts focuses on how badly we reacted in an important situation. We may berate ourselves. Such thinking generates feelings such as despair, insecurity, shame, impotence, anger and a debilitating lack of motivation. In a more positive sense, self-criticism allows us to review, evaluate and generate “better” behavioral alternatives.
6. **Self-coaching.** “I can do this” is a typical example of this form of thinking. Self-coaching is used to remind ourselves about something we learned to ensure that the current activity is successful. It is also used to encourage, inspire and motivate ourselves.
7. **Comparing.** One of the mind's more frequent activities is to determine the differences and similarities between ourselves and others. Comparing will lead to both positive feelings (“I did better than he did”) and negative ones (“How come she looks so much thinner?”).
8. **Criticizing.** These thoughts allow us to focus disapprovingly on every possible aspect of the other.
9. **Planning and Preparation.** In order to be well-equipped for an upcoming task, meeting, interaction and the like, the mind anticipates and reviews all that might occur or that needs to take place to ensure success. This type of thinking includes strategic planning, analysis and synthesis.
10. **Defensiveness and Rationalization.** The mind will find an unlimited number of ways to protect our ego from feeling inadequate, incompetent and inferior. The best form of defensiveness and rationalization is blame and criticism.

Thoughts can be provoked consciously, as when we plan and prepare. They can emerge quite beyond our will, as happens with self-criticism and defensiveness. The curious part of our thinking patterns is that we are mostly unaware that thinking is even taking place.

It is possible to train ourselves to proactively utilize our thinking process. If we allow our thoughts to run wild, we will limit our potential. We will be left to do only what we think is possible.

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