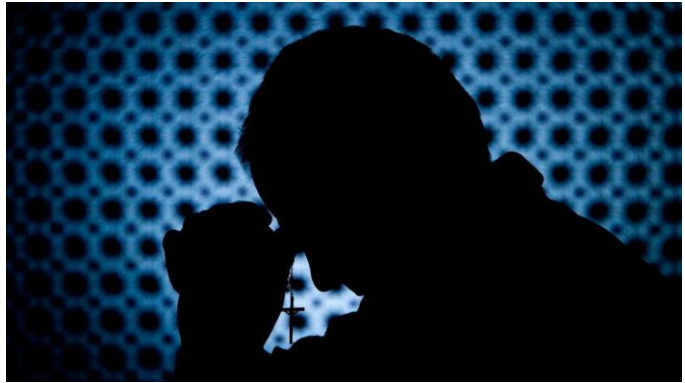


## NATIONAL CONFESSION FOR JULY 4

adapted from Hosea

### INVITATION

Return, to the Lord your God. Your deeds have been your downfall! Bring your confessions, and return to the Lord. Say to him, "Forgive all our sins and graciously receive us, so that we may offer you our praises." Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love; break up your fallow ground, for it is the time to seek the Lord, that he may come and rain righteousness upon you. What are you waiting for? Return to your God! Commit yourself in love, in justice! Wait for your God, and don't give up on him—ever!



### CONFESSION

We have plowed iniquity; we have reaped injustice; we have eaten the fruit of lies. Because we have trusted in our own way and in the multitude of our warriors.

Like an adulterous spouse our land is guilty of unfaithfulness to the Lord. We have not acknowledged that God is the one who gave us our harvests, who lavished on us the silver and gold. No one is faithful. No one loves. No one knows the first thing about God. We are a nation of adulterers, burning like an oven whose fire the baker does not even need to stir.

All this cussing and lying and killing, theft and loose sex, sheer anarchy, one murder after another! Thieves break into businesses; rioters raid our streets. Politicians protect the lawbreakers while media leaders laugh at their lies.

We don't realize that God is watching us. Our sinful deeds are all around us, and God sees them all. Yet our nation has not returned to the Lord their God.

Come, let us return to the Lord. He has torn us to pieces; now he will heal us. He has injured us; now he will bandage our wounds. In just a short time he will restore us, so that we may live in his presence. Oh, that we might know the Lord! Let us press on to know him. He will respond to us as surely as the arrival of dawn or the coming of rains in early spring.

Dear God, roar like a lion, that our church and our nation will tremble and follow you. Help us, for you are our God! You have been the Lord our God even before our founding. We acknowledge no God but you, for there is no other Savior.

### PROMISE OF FORGIVENESS

God declares: "You shall know me for who I really am. I have made you mine forever, and you shall see my righteousness and justice, unfailing love and compassion. I shall be faithful to you and make you mine, and you shall know me as the Lord."