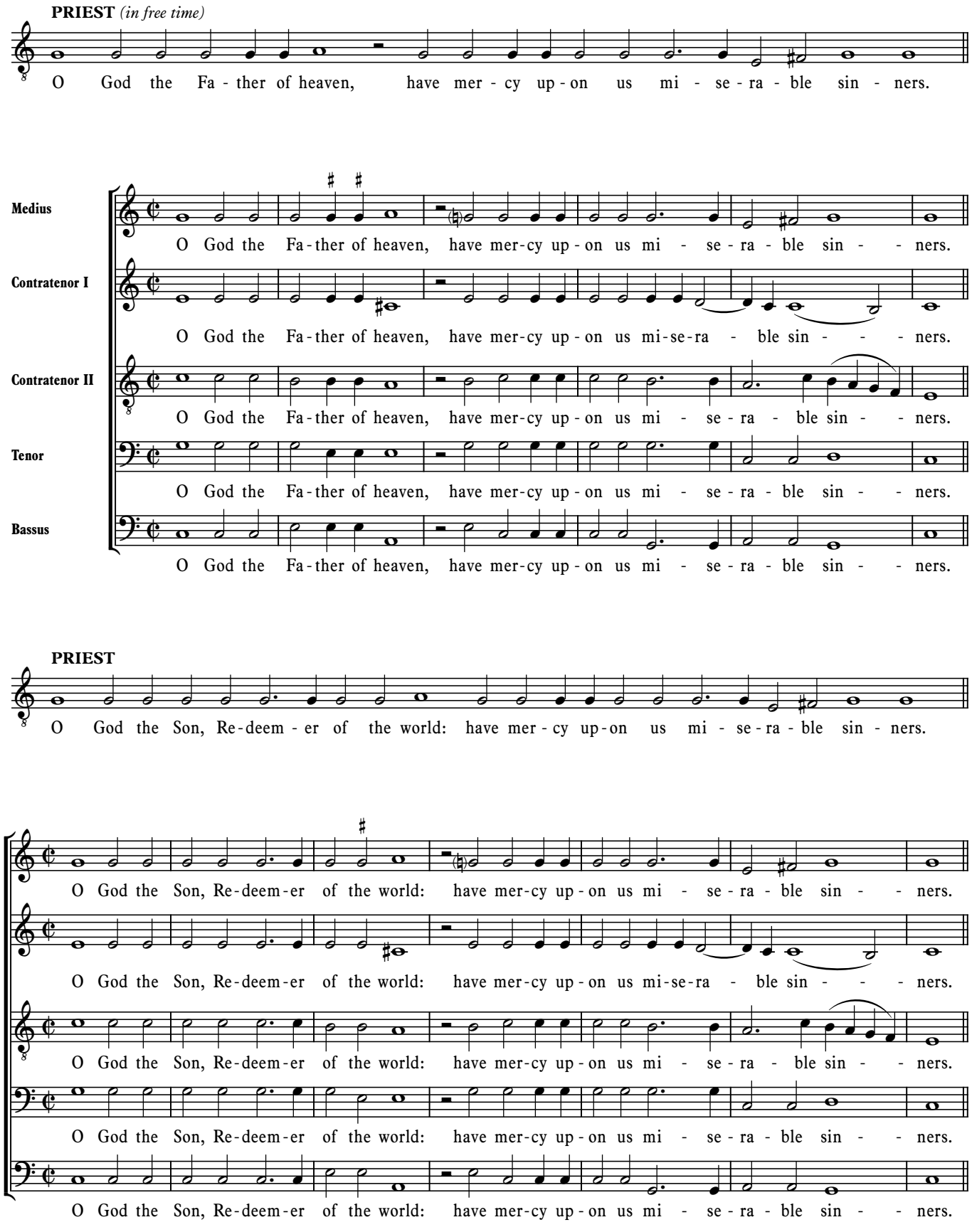
ANCIENT GROOVE MUSIC

Litany

Edited by
Ben Byram-Wigfield

THOMAS TALLIS
(1505 - 1585)



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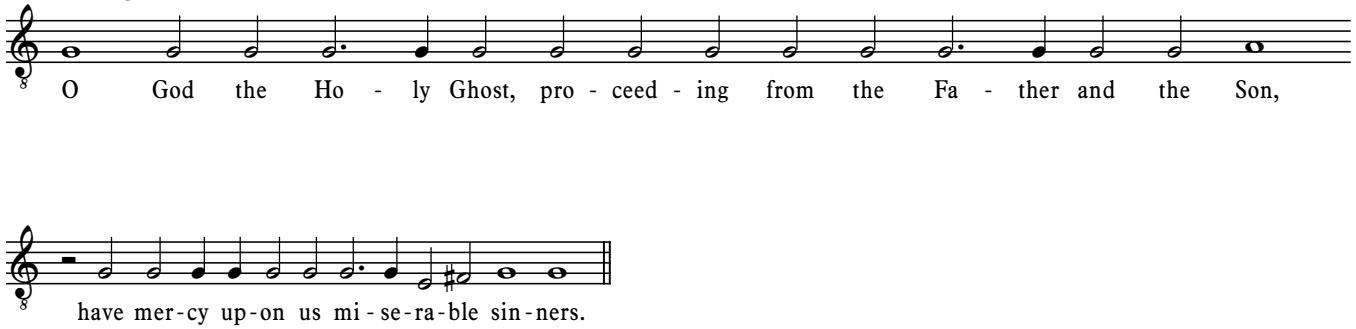

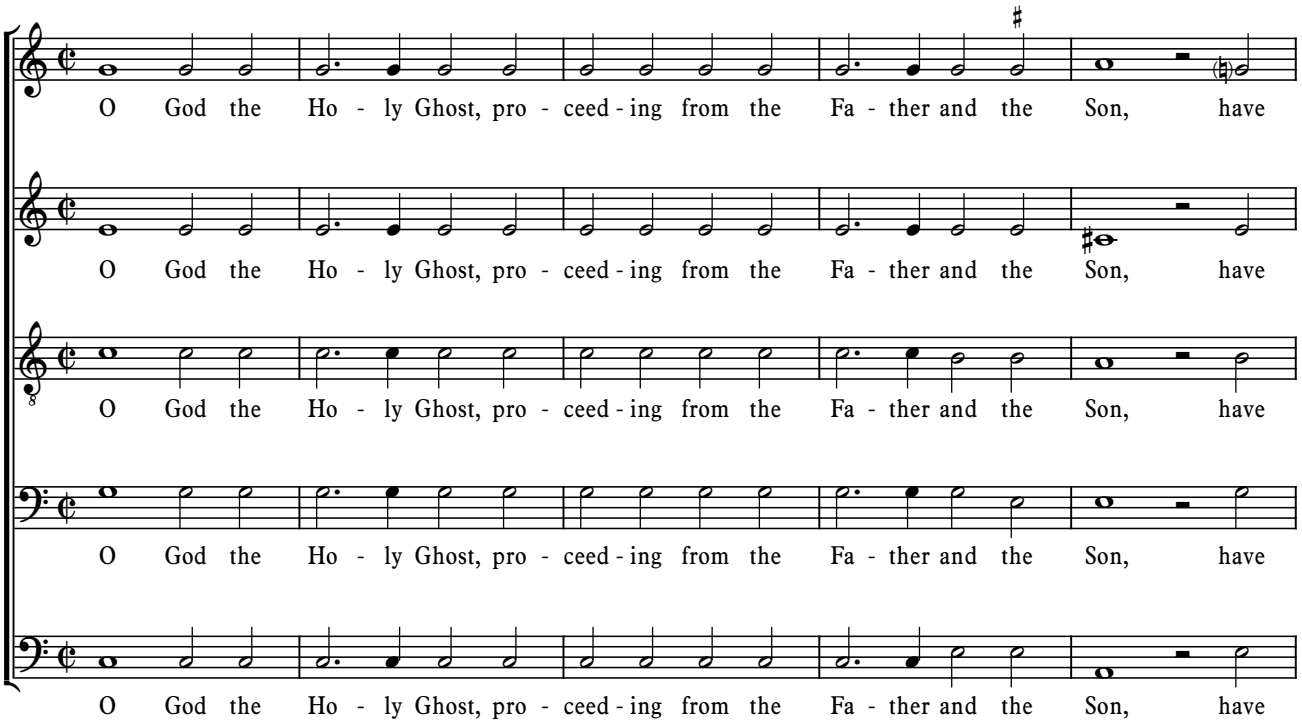

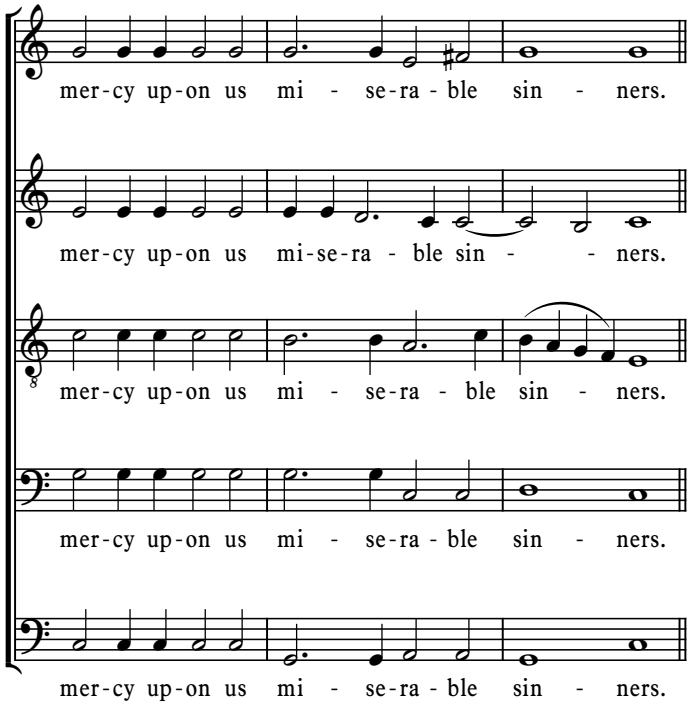

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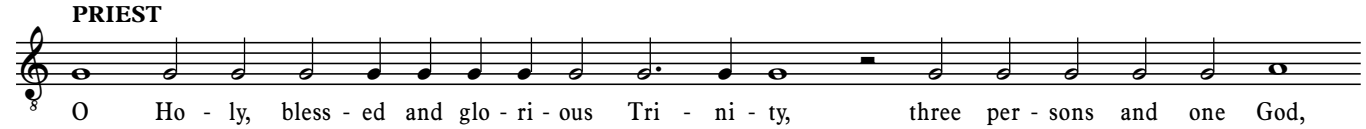

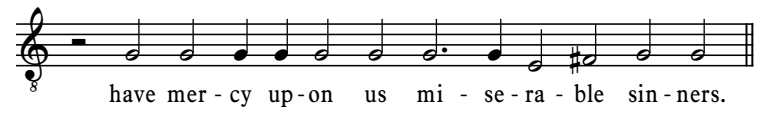

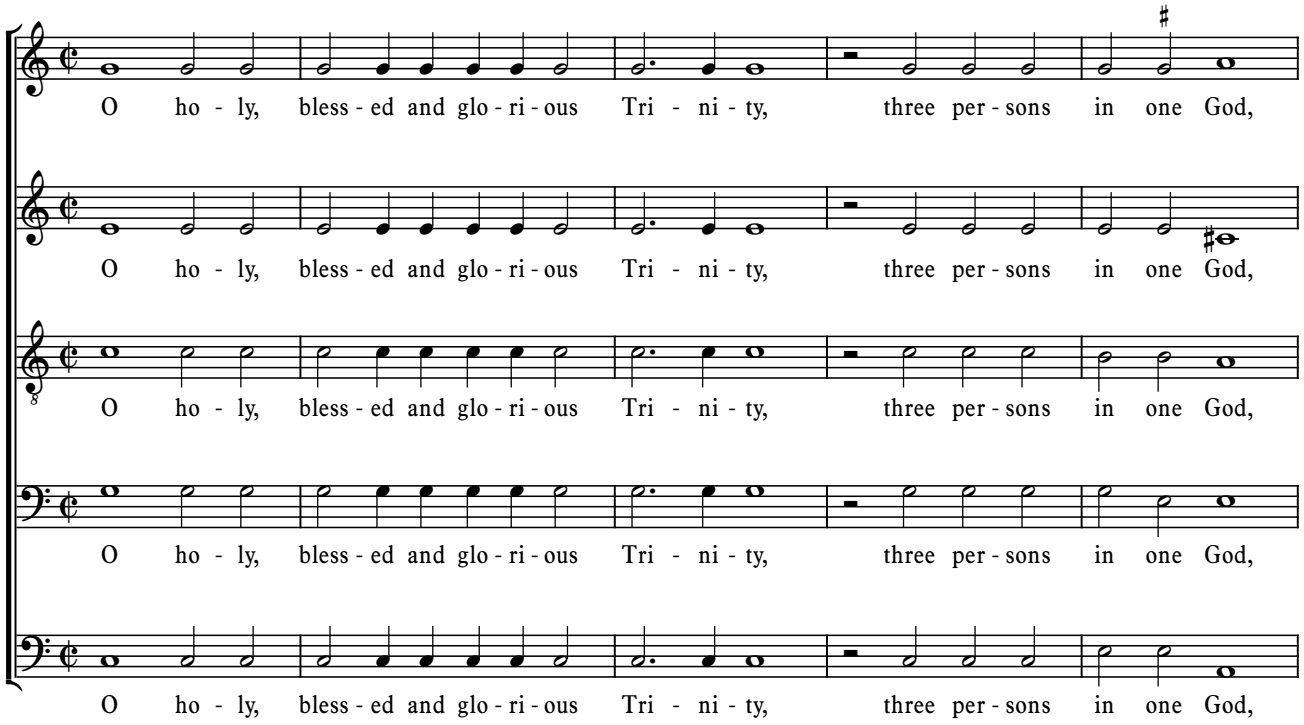

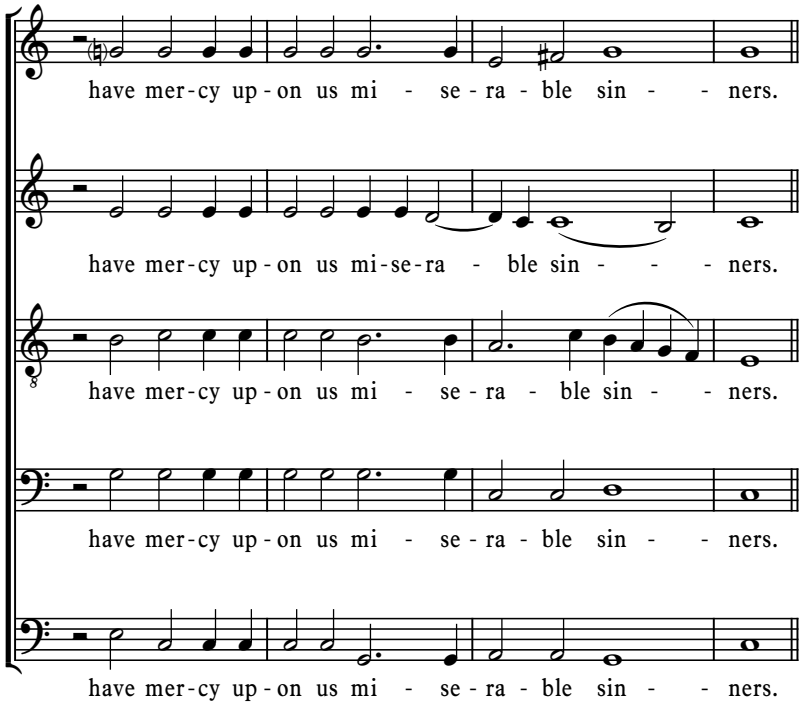

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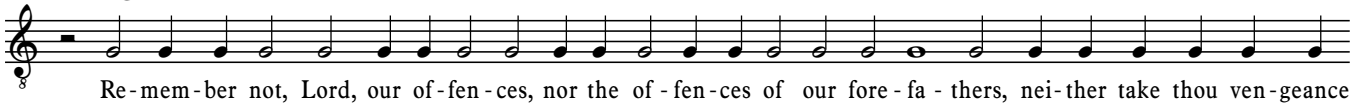

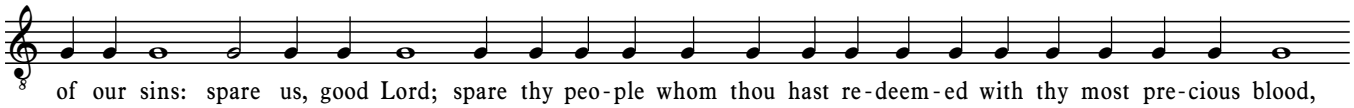

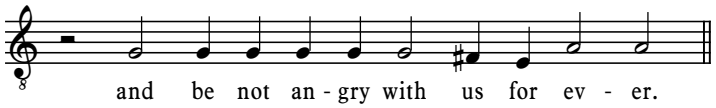

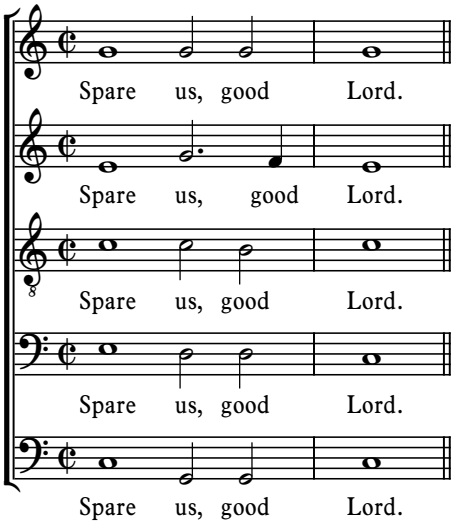

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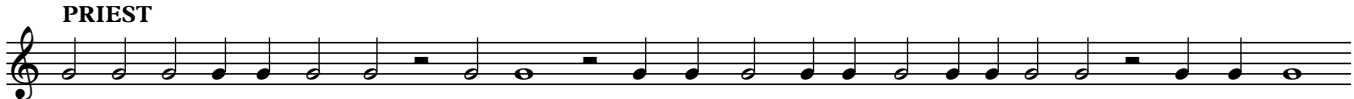
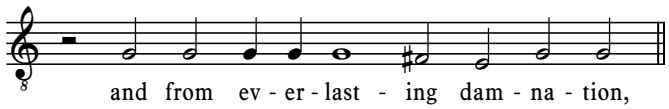
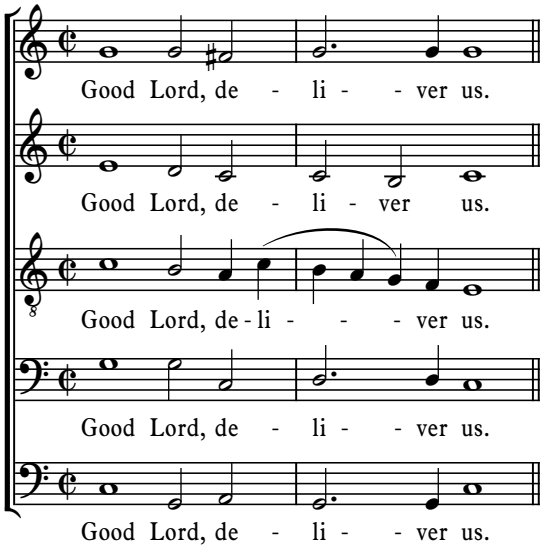






From all blindness of heart; from pride, vainglory, and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred, and malice; and from all want of charity, ℟

From all inordinate and sinful affections; and from all the deceits of the world, the flesh, and the devil, ℟

From all false doctrine, heresy, and schism; from hardness of heart, and contempt of thy Word and commandment, ℟

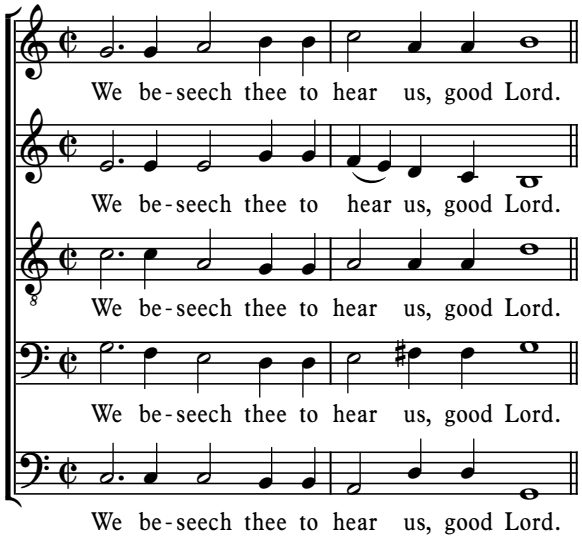
From lightning and tempest; from earthquake, fire, and flood; from plague, pestilence, and famine, ℟

From all oppression, conspiracy, and rebellion; from violence, battle, and murder; and from dying suddenly and unprepared, ℟

By the mystery of thy holy Incarnation; by thy holy Nativity and submission to the Law; by thy Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation, ℟

By thine Agony and Bloody Sweat; by thy Cross and Passion; by thy precious Death and Burial; by thy glorious Resurrection and Ascension; and by the Coming of the Holy Ghost, ℟

In all time of our tribulation; in all time of our prosperity; in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, ℟



We sinners do beseech thee to hear us, O Lord God: and that it may please thee to rule and govern thy holy Church universal in the right way,

We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.

That it may please thee to keep and strengthen in the true worshipping of thee, in righteousness and holiness of life, thy Servant CHARLES, our most gracious King and Governor, ℟

That it may please thee to rule his heart in thy faith, fear, and love, and that he may evermore have affiance in thee, and ever seek thy honour and glory, ℟

That it may please thee to be his defender and keeper, giving him the victory over all his enemies, ℟

That it may please thee to bless and preserve Queen Camilla, William Prince of Wales, the Princess of Wales, and all the Royal Family, ℟

That it may please thee to illuminate all Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, with true knowledge and understanding of thy Word; and that both by their preaching and living they may set it forth and shew it accordingly, ℟

That it may please thee to endue the Lords of the Council, and all the Nobility, with grace, wisdom, and understanding, ℟

That it may please thee to bless and keep the Magistrates, giving them grace to execute justice, and to maintain truth, ℟

That it may please thee to bless and keep all thy people, ℟

That it may please thee to give to all nations unity, peace, and concord, ℟

That it may please thee to give us an heart to love and dread thee, and diligently to live after thy commandments, ℟

That it may please thee to give to all thy people increase of grace, to hear meekly thy Word, and to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, ℟

That it may please thee to bring into the way of truth all such as have erred, and are deceived, ℟

That it may please thee to strengthen such as do stand; and to comfort and help the weak-hearted; and to raise up them that fall; and finally to beat down Satan under our feet, ℟

That it may please thee to succour, help, and comfort all that are in danger, necessity, and tribulation, ℟

That it may please thee to preserve all that travel by land or by water, all women labouring of child, all sick persons, and young children; and to shew thy pity upon all prisoners and captives, ℟

That it may please thee to defend, and provide for, the fatherless children, and widows, and all that are desolate and oppressed,

That it may please thee to have mercy upon all men, ℟

That it may please thee to forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers, and to turn their hearts, ℟

That it may please thee to give and preserve to our use the kindly fruits of the earth, so as in due time we may enjoy them, ℟

That it may please thee to give us true repentance; to forgive us all our sins, negligences, and ignorances; and to endue us with the grace of thy Holy Spirit, to amend our lives according to thy holy Word,

We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.

Litany

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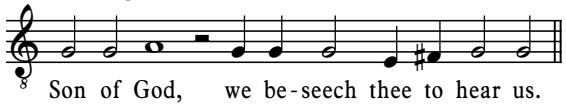

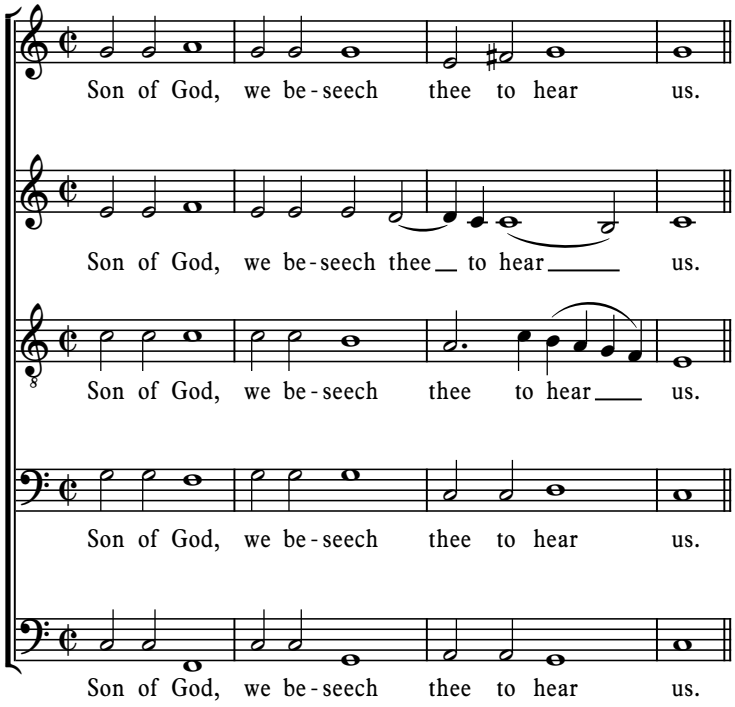

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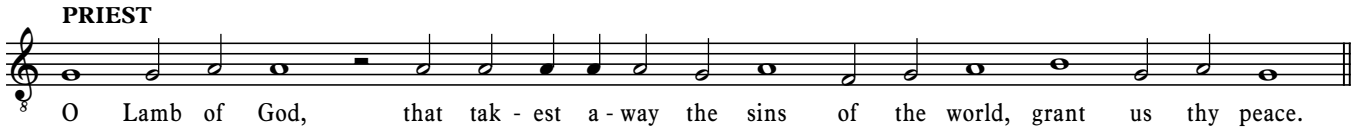

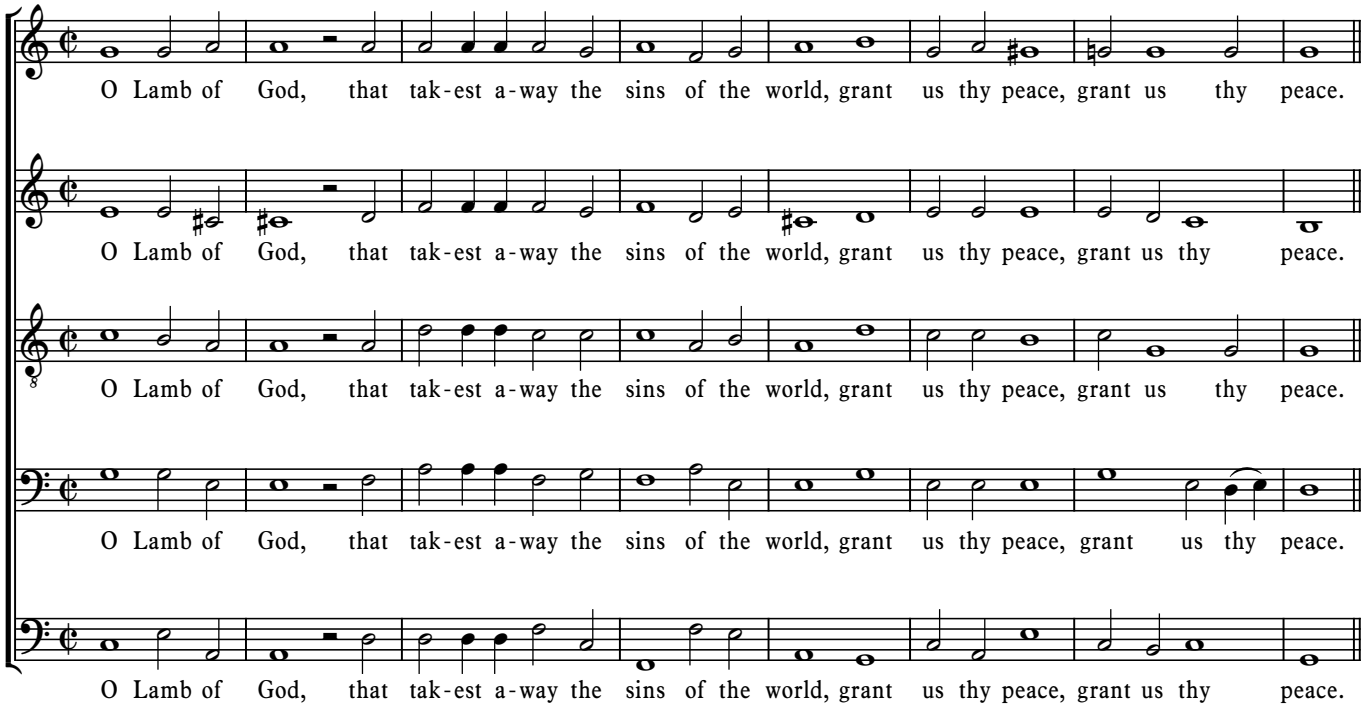

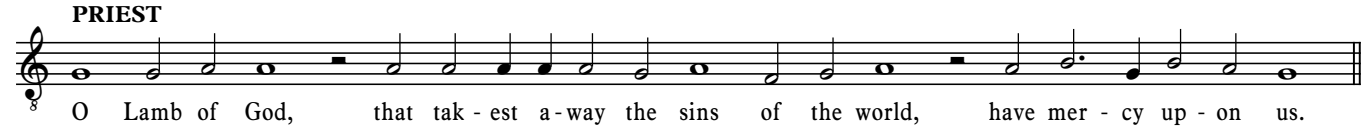

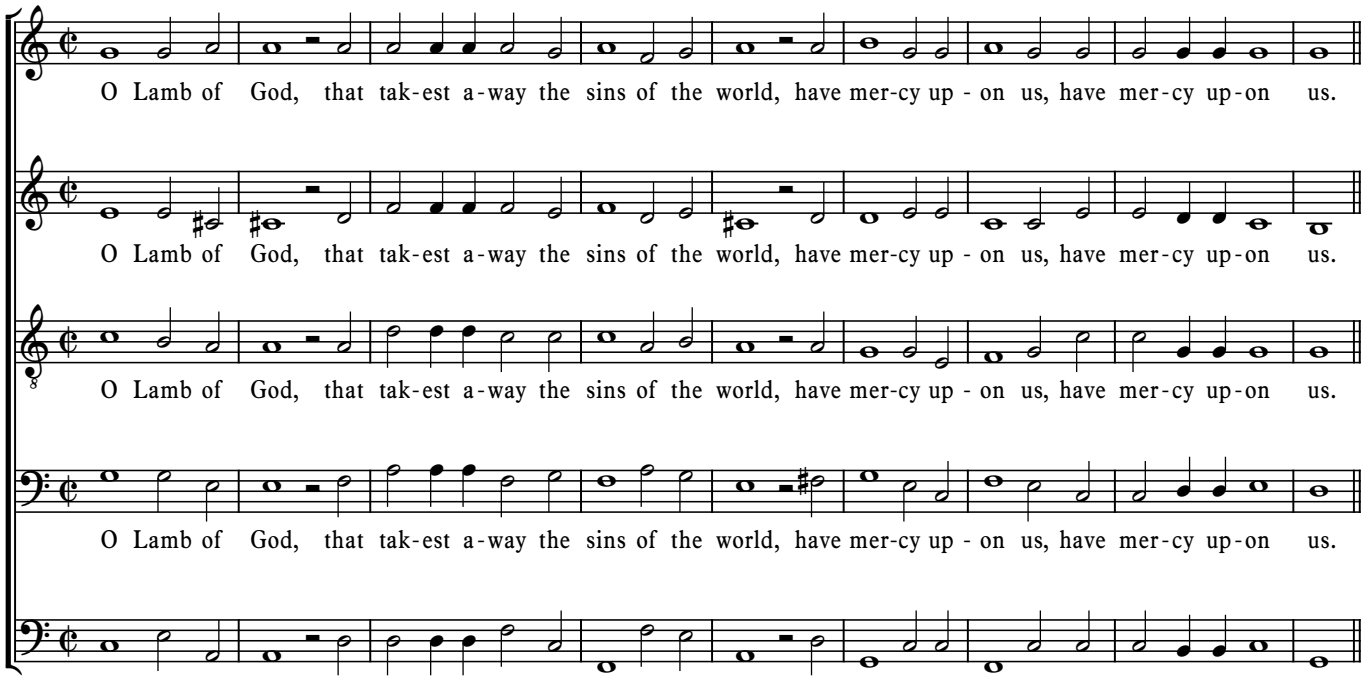

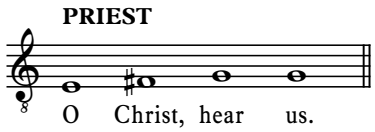

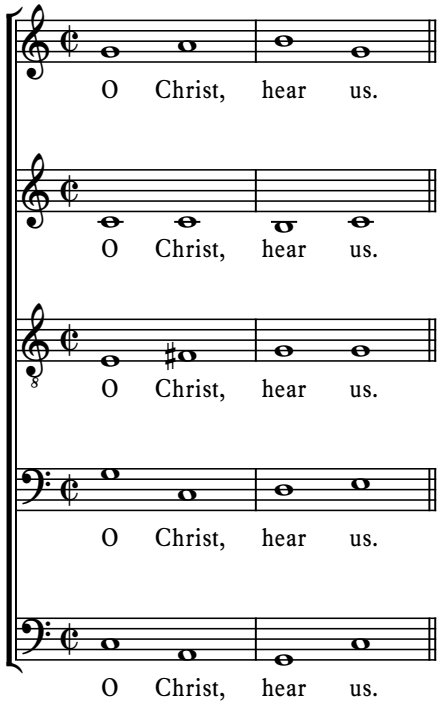

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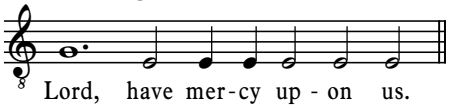

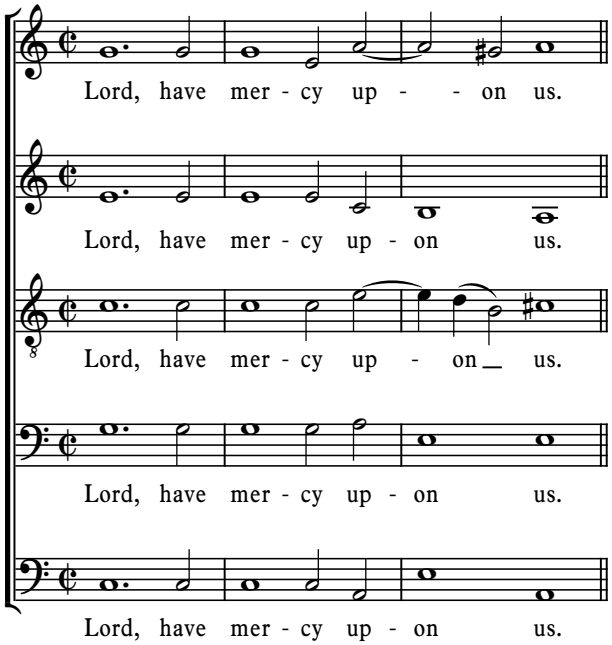

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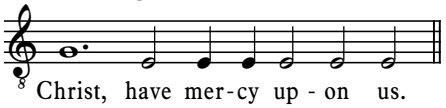

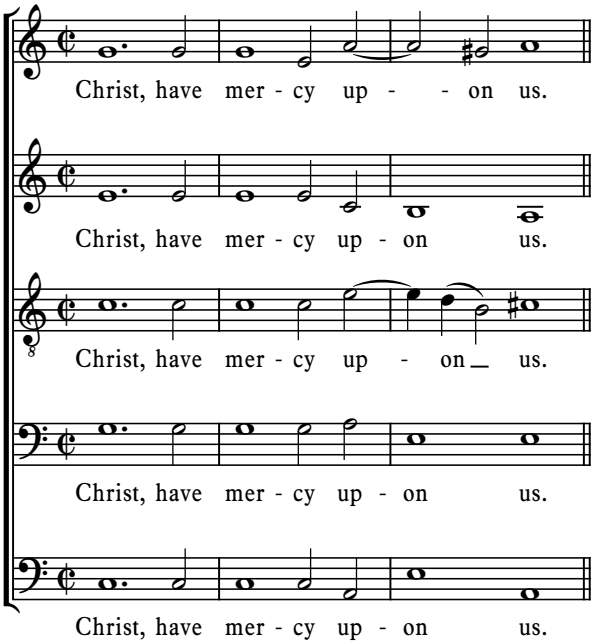

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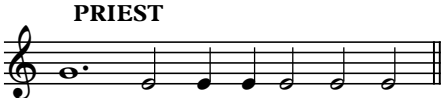

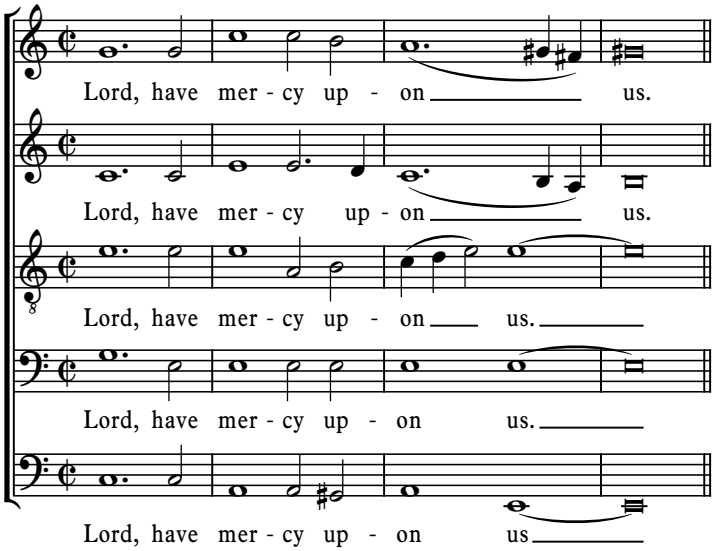

ANCIENT GROOVE MUSIC

THOMAS TALLIS: LITANY

Editorial Notes

Sources:
John Barnard, *The First Book of Selected Church Musick*, 1641

Cambridge, Peterhouse: 'Latter Caroline Set'

GB-Cp MS 35	TD	3
GB-Cp MS 37	BD	4
GB-Cp MS 42	CtD	26 Four-part conflation of both CT parts.
GB-Cp MS 44	MD	5

GB-Cq G.4.17: Tenor and Contratenor parts (together on one staff).
Durham Cathedral: MS A5 (Organ book)

Other sources have also been consulted (such as the Chirk Castle partbooks), along with Andrew Johnstone's article:
Thomas Tallis and the five-part English Litany of 1544: evidence of 'the notes used in the king's majesty's chapel' *Early Music*, Vol. xliv, No. 2, 2016.

Some rhythmic variation on the reciting notes has been adjusted. The Peterhouse and Durham books show sharpened Gs at the end of the reciting note; this is shown as an accidental above the note.

Two of the responses are problematic: 'Spare us, good Lord' and 'O Christ, hear us'. Some notes have been redistributed across the parts, mostly for the purpose of preserving the *cantus firmus*.

The Peterhouse Decani Contratenor part appears to mix notes from the Cantoris part with other notes, and so may well be an adaptation for only four parts. Thus, the Cambridge partbooks provide music for four of the five parts, and some notes for the Decani Contratenor.

All the surviving source material is unsatisfactory in some regard, while also providing some material that is unique or more 'authentic' than other. Thus, a jigsaw can be completed from all the material. This is therefore something of a reconstruction, rather than a verbatim copy of any set of sources.

Ben Byram-Wigfield
London, 2026

The Cambridge material is consistent in using a contracted form of the reciting rhythm found in Barnard and other sources.

O God the Father of the world:
Both Barnard & Cambridge sources broadly agree in the music for the first response, which is repeated several times. Cambridge has a contracted rhythm for the recited portion. Barnard alternates the two Contratenor parts in each repetition; Cambridge maintains the lower voice with the descending scale in the Second Contratenor. This edition follows Cambridge, allowing this part to be sung by a tenor throughout.

Bar 2: Durham and Cambridge sources have g♯ on 2nd beat, here and all other instances of the same chord progression. The Tenor part moves off the octave G to an E at this point, allowing the alteration. This is marked in the edition with an asterisk. While unlikely to have been Tallis's original intention, it may reflect early 17th-century usage.

Spare us good Lord. In most sources, two parts have the same notes (All Gs). Barnard has both the Medius and Tenor singing all Gs. The Peterhouse Medius has all Gs, and the Decani Tenor book provides an alternative line, which is matched in the Queens College MS. However the Queens MS contains two parts on the same staff, and the other vocal line (2nd Contratenor) is also all Gs, and there is no way of telling whether the parts are inverted.

grant us thy peace: Barnard lacks the G♯ at the end of the first phrase, which is found in Peterhouse. Peterhouse et al have slightly different rhythms. Tenor part source has minims for the notes written here in crotchets.

We beseech thee: Tenor, 2nd note is F♯ in earliest source material, reflecting cantus firmus from Sarum rite. Barnard gives a G.

O Christ, Hear us: Another response where Barnard and the manuscript sources differ. Barnard has the cantus firmus in the Medius part, arranging the other parts to fit. Queens' has the cantus firmus in amongst the notes in its two-part staff, though because they are stemless, it cannot be known which is which. Peterhouse gives the Medius a line a third higher.

Lord have mercy