W. Jay Sydeman

The Gospel According to John

SATB a cappella and Speaker

(c. 1984)

Arts Aeturnum Productions

"In the beginning was the Word…" and is the "Word" the primordial sound (vibration) from which all creation springs? In any event this text with all its ambiguities has spoken to me strongly enough to want to set it to music, in this case an a cappella choral work with solo speaker. The style of music is also somewhat ambiguous, from the cluster-like sounds of the 20th century avant-garde to simpler tonal settings – all, I believe, in service of this most mystical of Gospels.

– W. Jay Sydeman, November 2015

W. Jay Sydeman's life mirrors the breadth and variety of his music. Born in New York in 1928 and educated at Manhattan's Mannes School of Music, he quickly became one of the most sought-after and honored composers of his generation, receiving commissions from such prestigious groups as the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the Tanglewood Music Center, and the Boston Symphony, which premiered his orchestral work in memory of John F. Kennedy in 1966. "Sydeman uses a whole battery of far out techniques," wrote the New York Times, "but he has an uncanny ability to throw in the whole avant-garde machinery as if it were the simplest, most normal way of making music in the world ... More than many of his colleagues, he seems to know what will sound well, and he works for some remarkably attractive, pure textures. His sounds seem to grow from a physical sense of exactly what material is right."

In 1970, after a heady period that included awards from the National institute of Arts and Letters, the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Library of Congress, Sydeman left New York – and composition – to begin a journey of personal and artistic exploration.

"Around 1980," he has written, "I returned to composition – at first a large number of choral works which reconnected me to the source of all music – the human voice. Out of this new lyric impulse have evolved all of my works since that time – more romantic, more accessible. I create music for the musician."

– Howard Hersh,
Artistic Director of "Music Now"

Sydeman is part of a composers' group in Nevada City annually producing the "Wet Ink Festival of New Music." He now lives in Mendocino and hosts a bi-weekly program on KZYX, "The Mind of a Composer", 10 am to noon on Mondays, introducing and commenting on contemporary music.

Duration: circa 11:00

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Edited and engraved by Rick Shinozaki (Albany, CA) in consultation & collaboration with the composer.

The Gospel According to John

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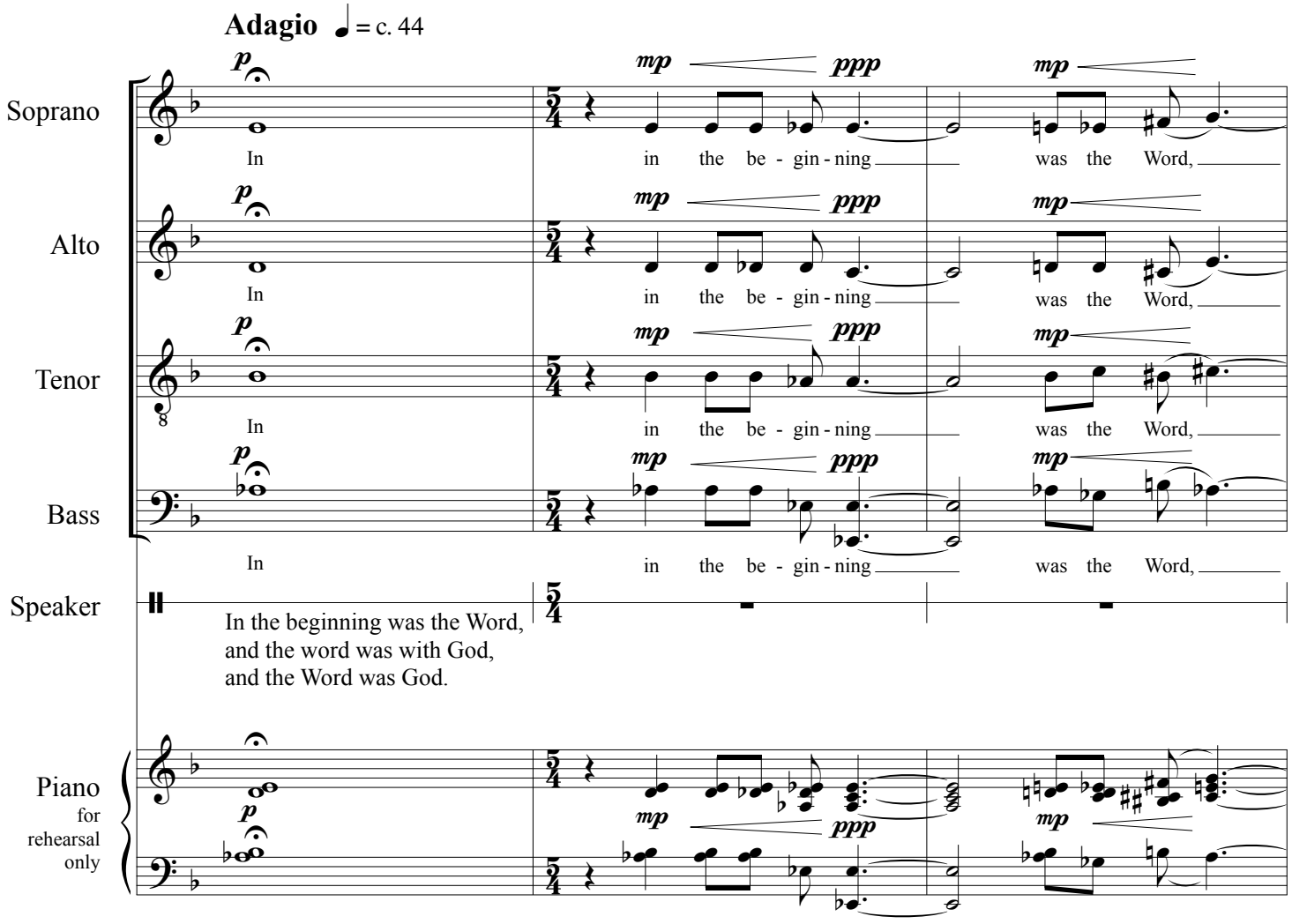

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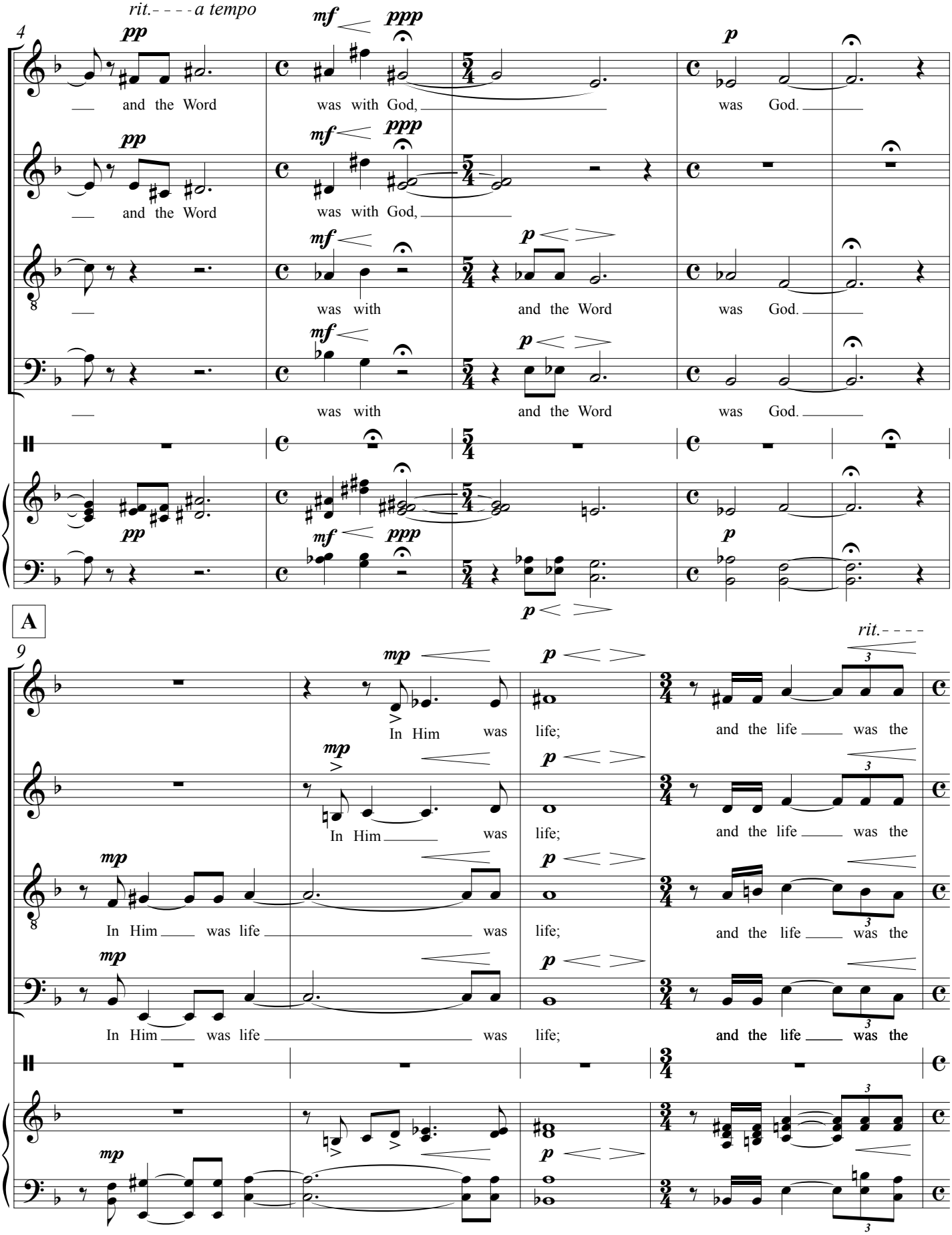
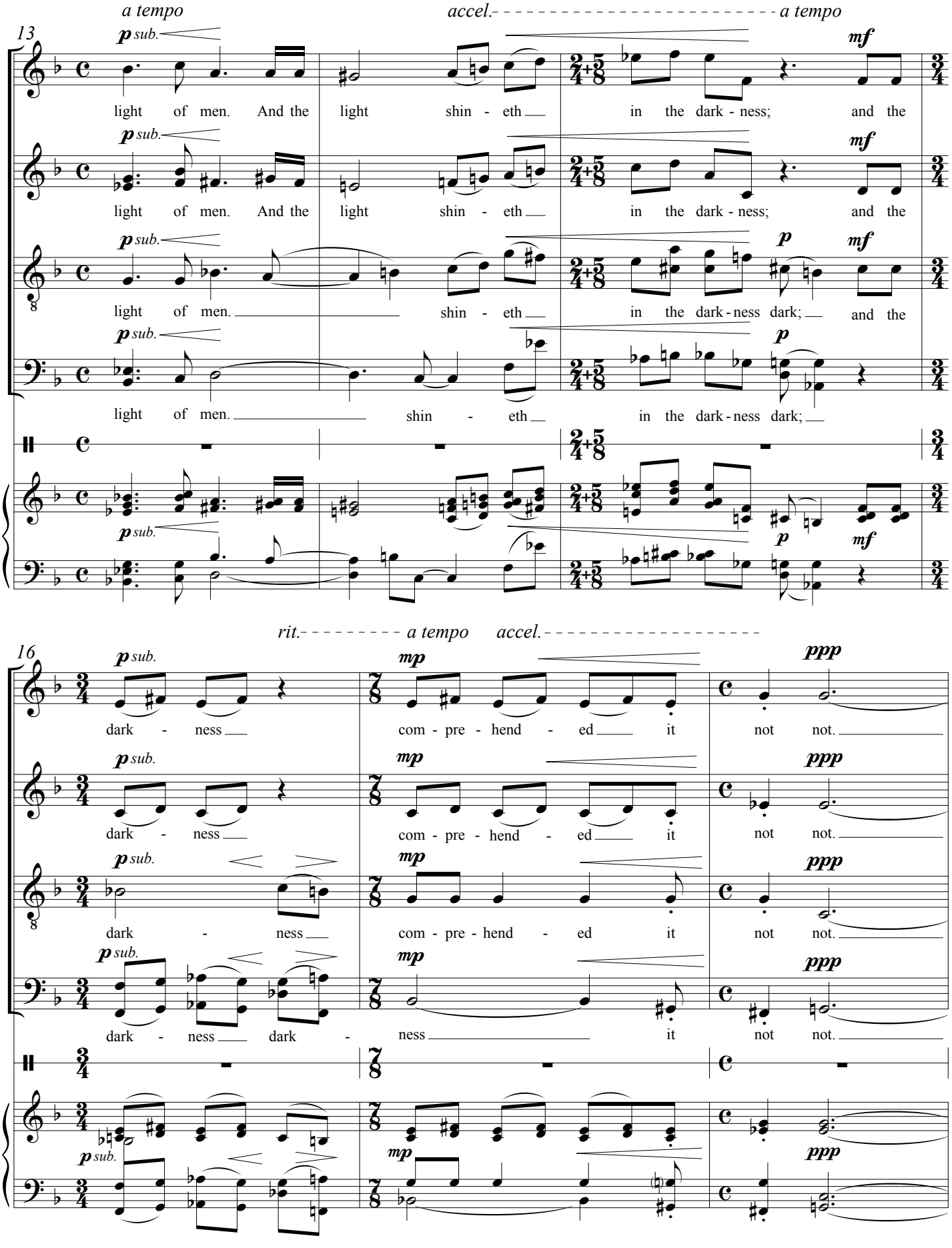
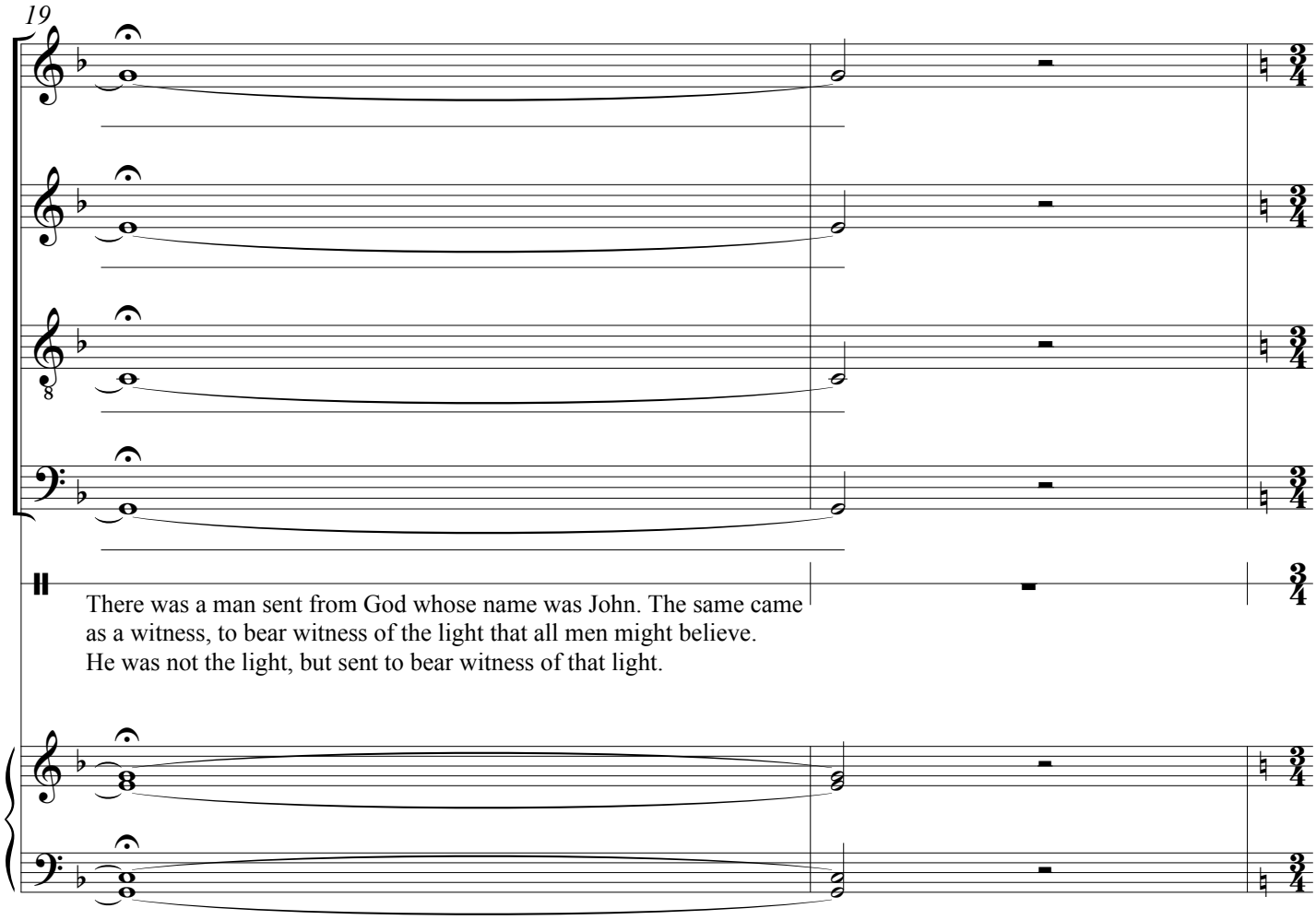

rit.- - - - a tempo
4
pp
mf
ppp
p
and the Word
was with God,
was God.
was with
and the Word
was God.
A
9
mp
In Him
was life;
and the life
was the
rit.- - - -


a tempo
accel.
a tempo
13
p sub.
mf
light of men. And the light shin - eth in the dark - ness; and the
p
light of men. shin - eth in the dark - ness dark; and the
light of men. shin - eth in the dark - ness dark;
rit.
a tempo
accel.
16
mp
ppp
dark - ness com - pre - hend - ed it not not.
dark - ness dark - ness it not not.


19
There was a man sent from God whose name was John. The same came
as a witness, to bear witness of the light that all men might believe.
He was not the light, but sent to bear witness of that light.

B **Con moto** ♩ = c. 105

21

p

That was the true light that light - eth eve - ry man that

p *sub.*

That was the true light that light - eth eve - ry man that

That was the true light that light - eth eve - ry man that

That was the true light that light - eth eve - ry man that

25

C

com - eth in - to the world. He was in the world,

com - eth in - to the world. He was in the world,

com - eth in - to the world. He was in the world,

com - eth in - to the world. in the world the world,

♩ = c. 106

29

rit. - - - - - - - - - - *a tempo*

and the world was made by Him and the world knew Him not.

and the world was made by Him and the world knew Him not.

and the world was made by Him and the world knew Him not.

f

and the world was made by Him and the world knew Him not. He

f

D

32

f

He came un - to His

f

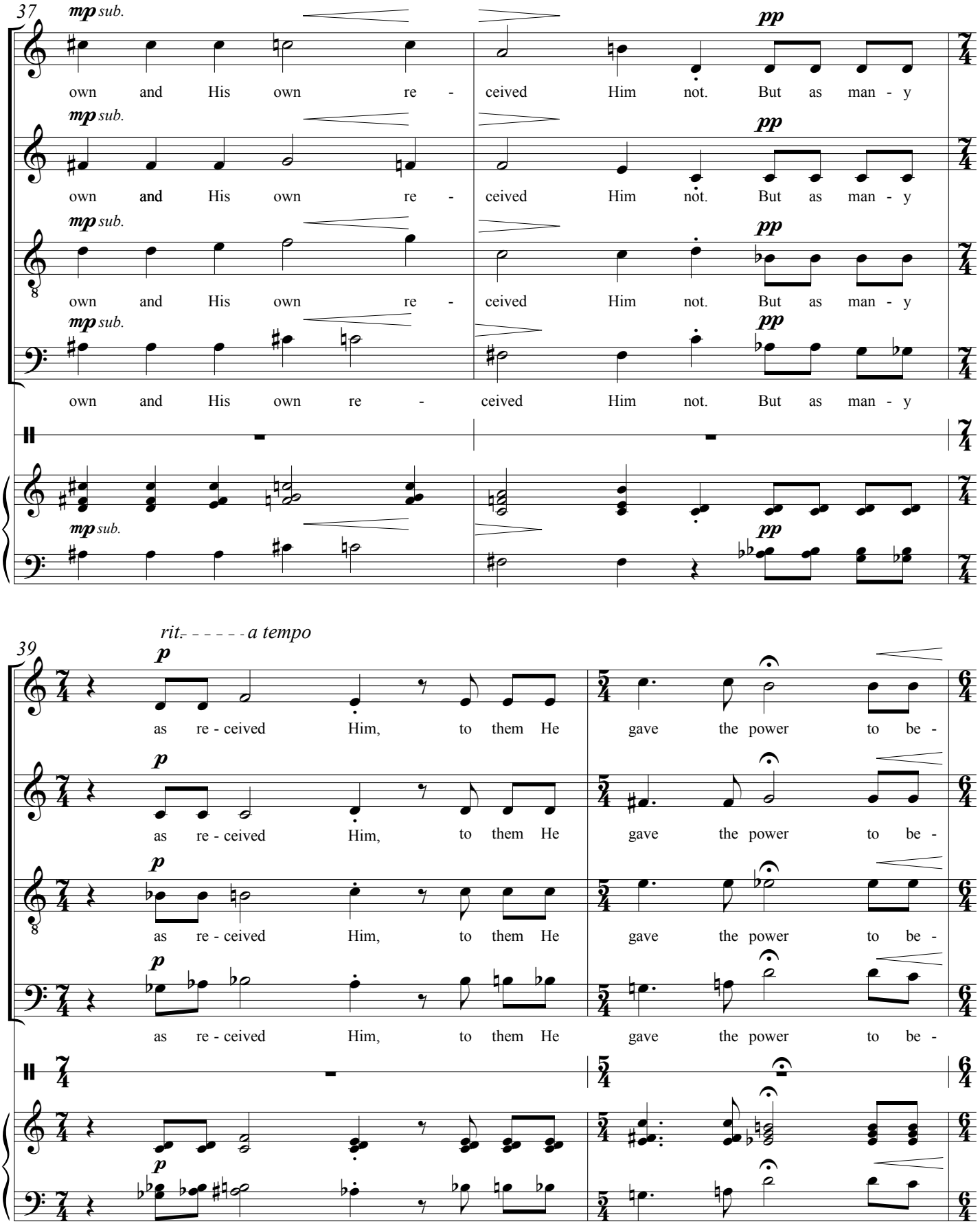
He came un - to His own, came un - to His

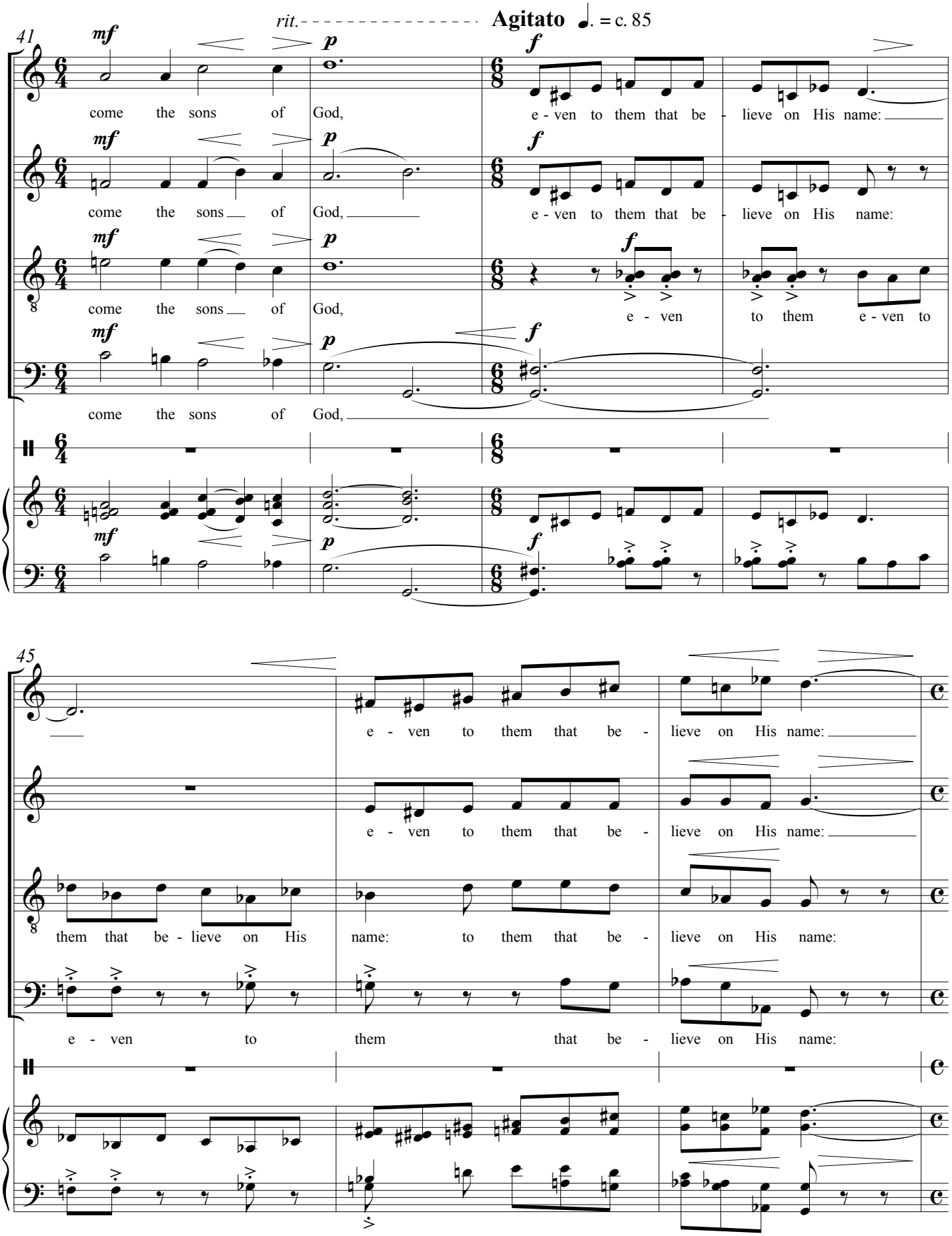
f

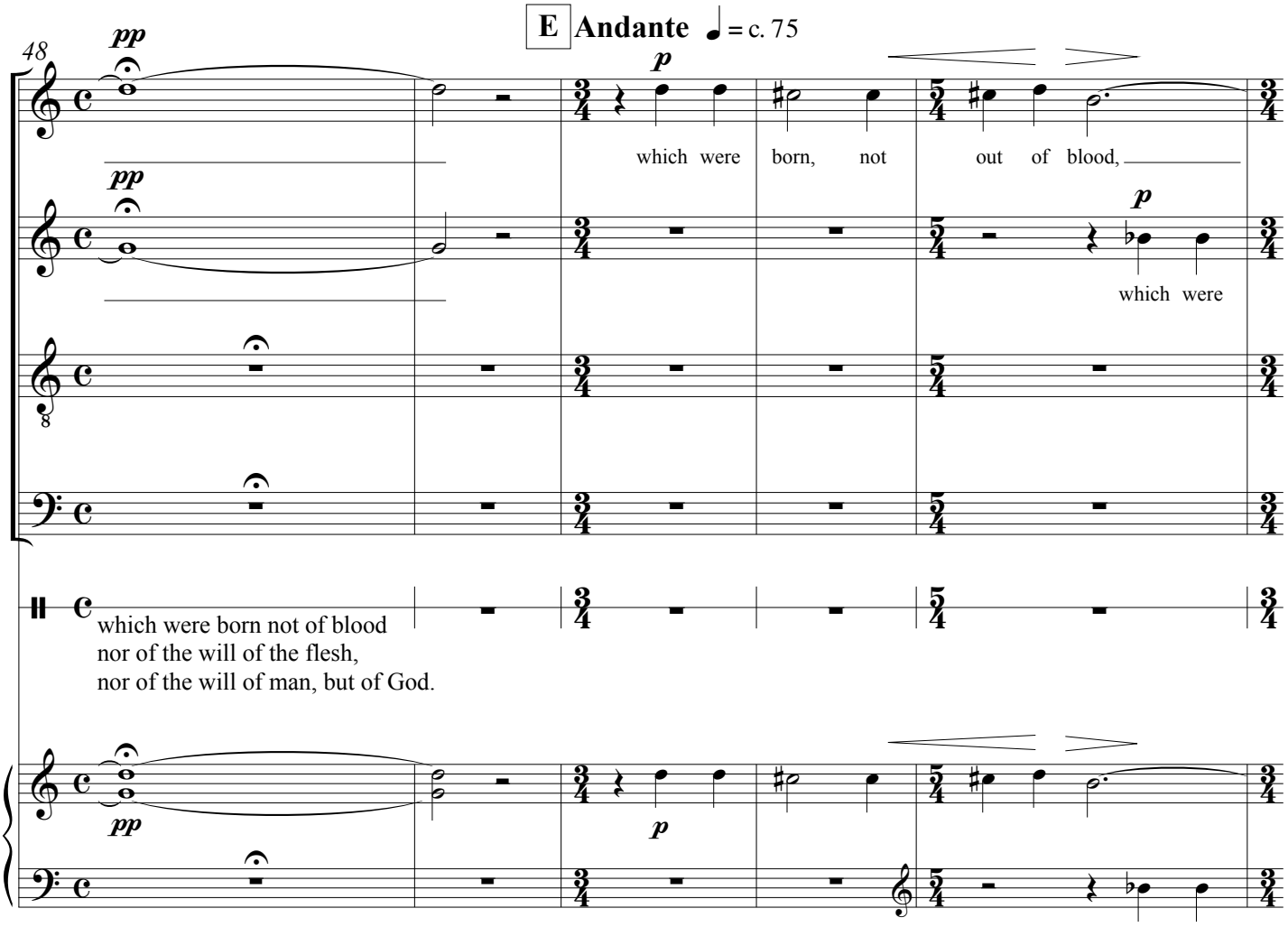
He came un - to His

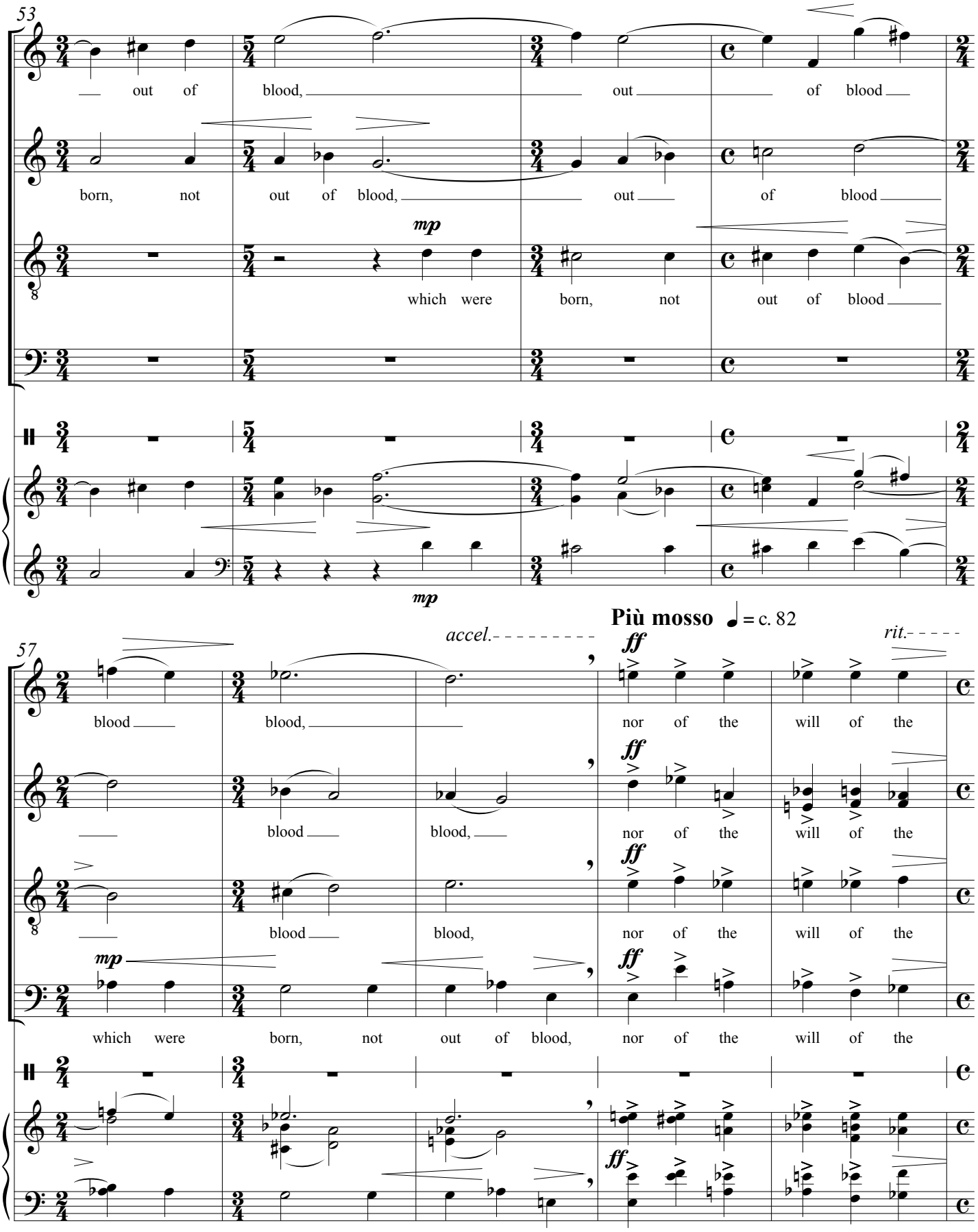
mf

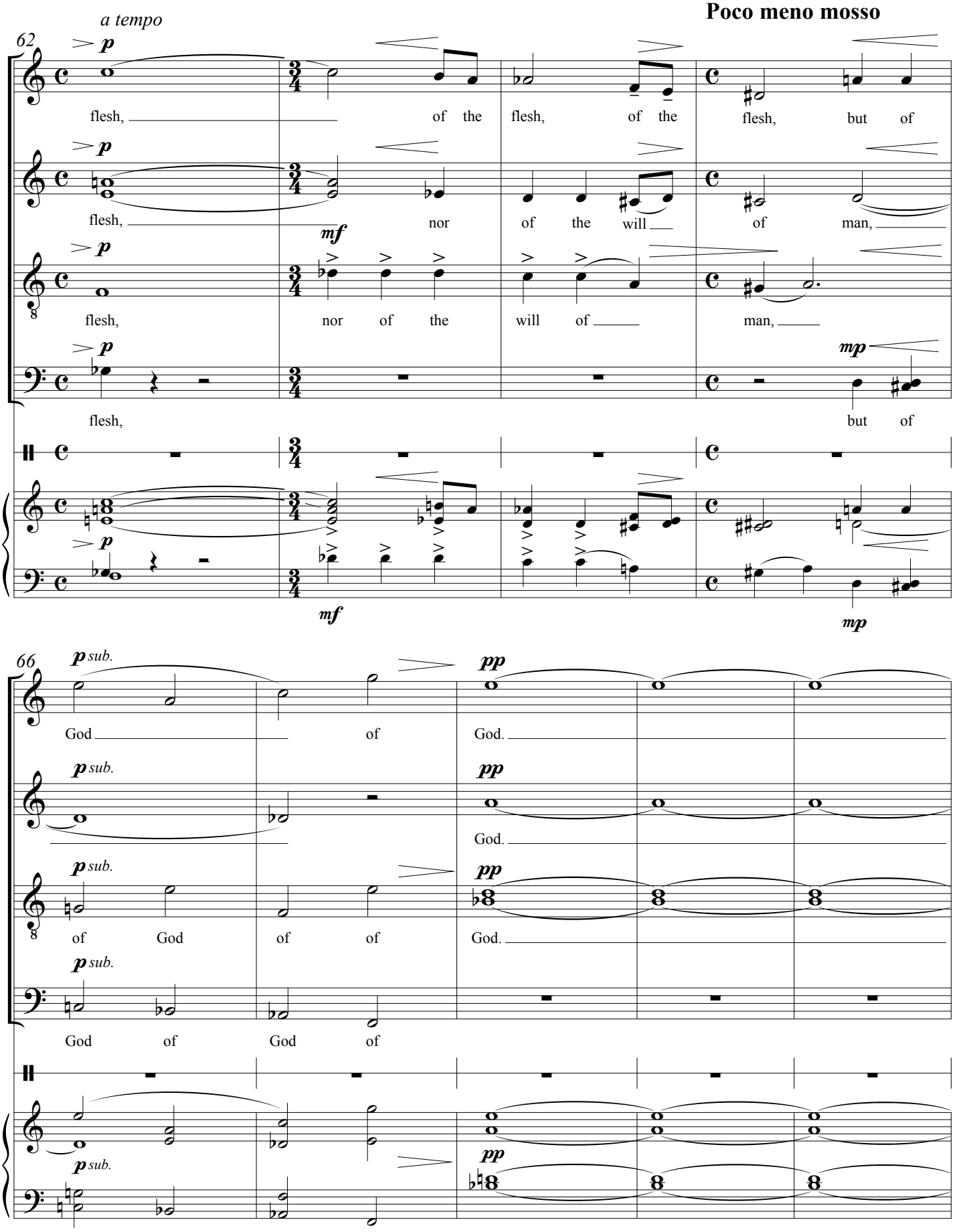
came un - to His own, to His own, un - to His

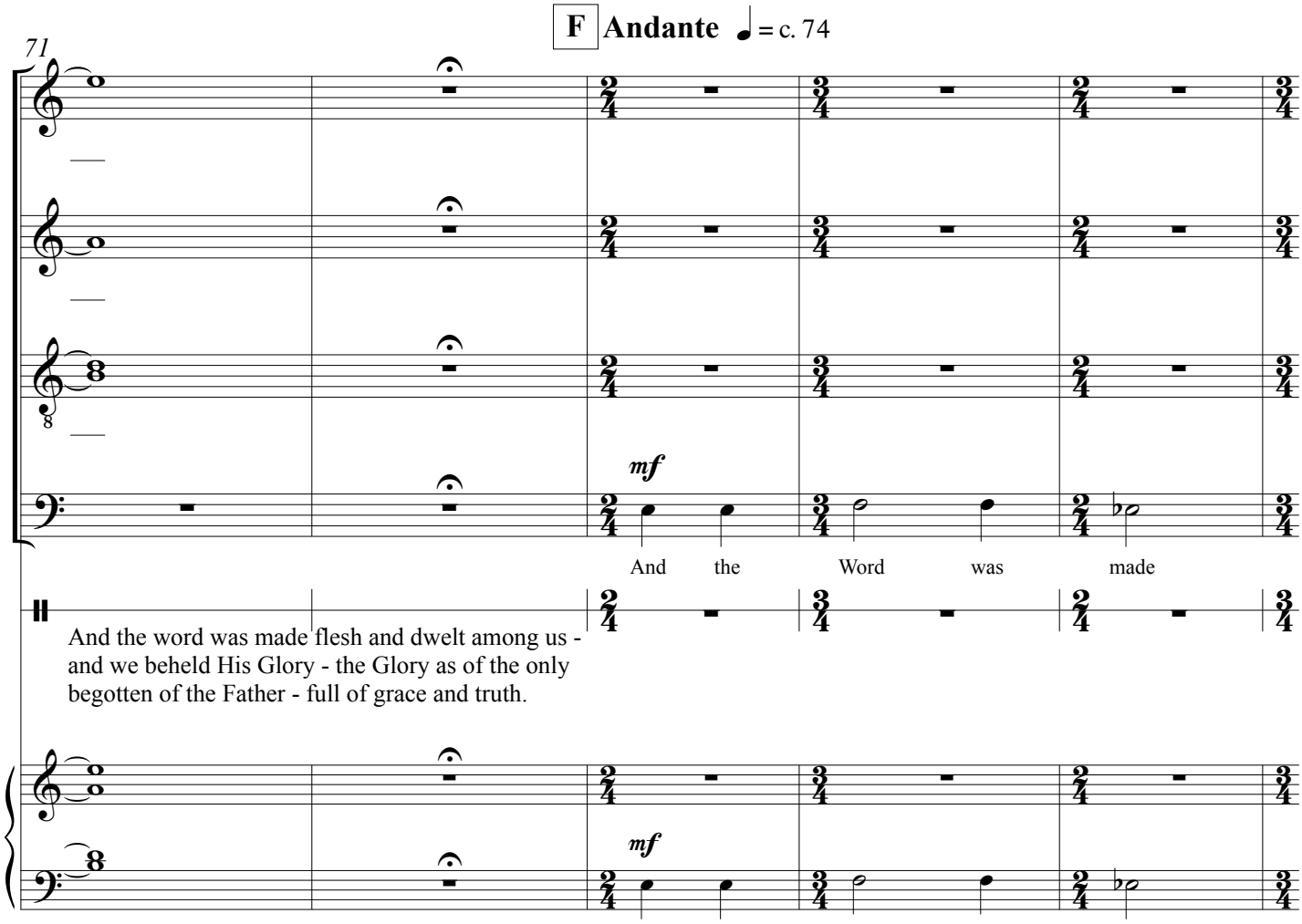

37
mp sub.
own and His own re - ceived Him not. But as man - y
pp
39
rit. - - - - - a tempo
p
as re - ceived Him, to them He gave the power to be -

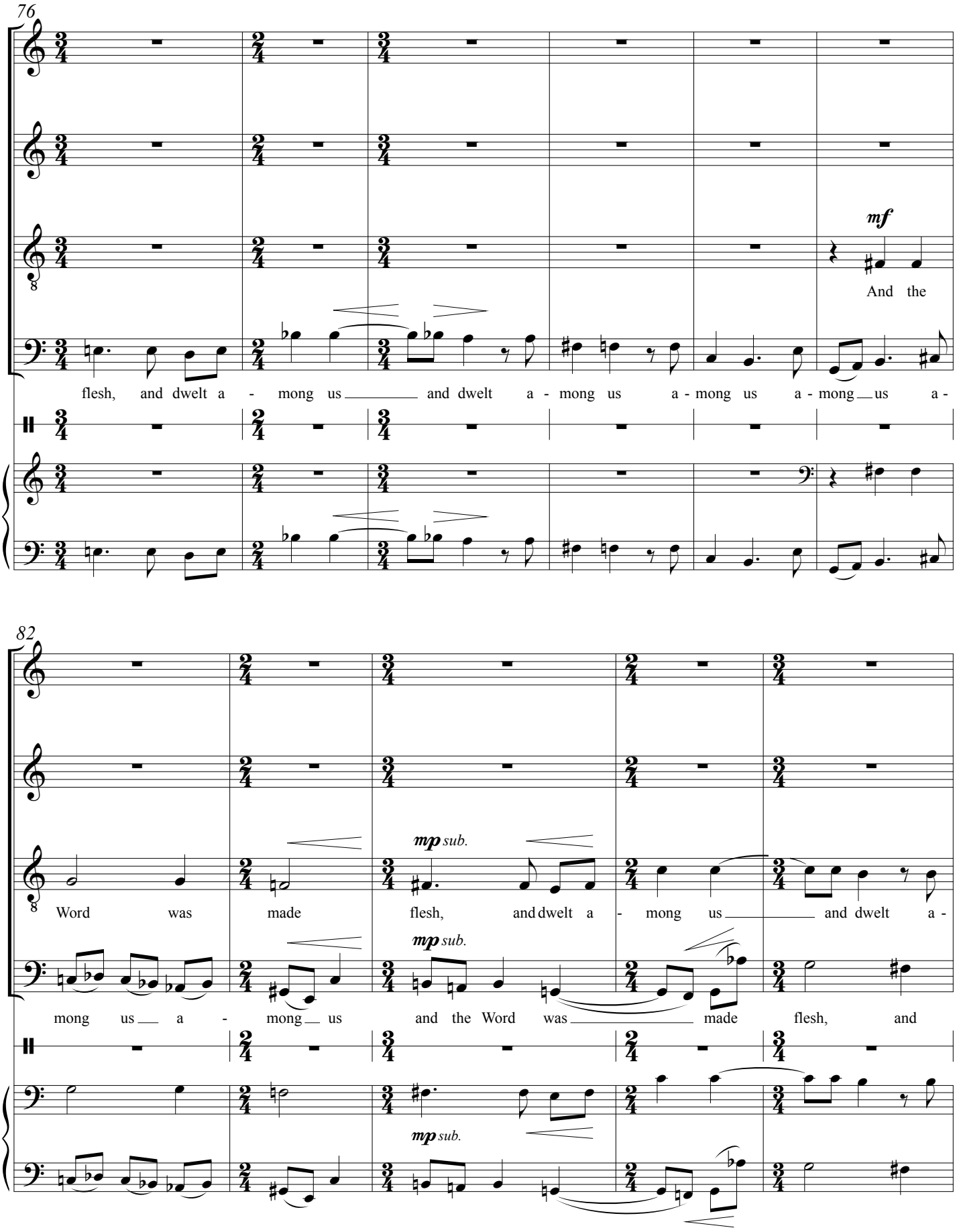

rit.
Agitato ♩. = c. 85
41
mf
p
f
come the sons of God,
e - ven to them that be - lieve on His name:
45
them that be - lieve on His name: to them that be - lieve on His name:

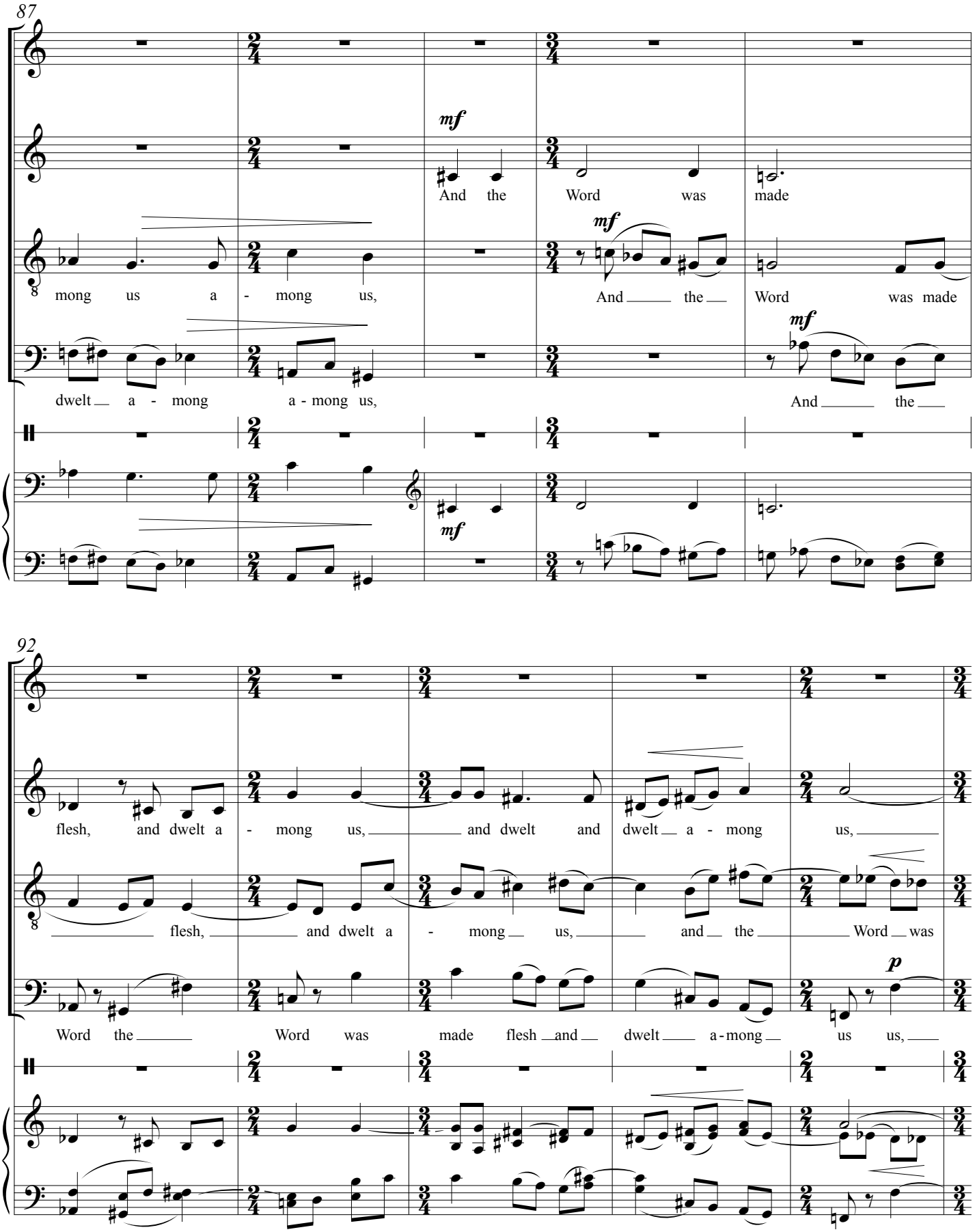

E Andante ♩ = c. 75
48
pp
p
which were born, not out of blood,
which were
which were born not of blood
nor of the will of the flesh,
nor of the will of man, but of God.

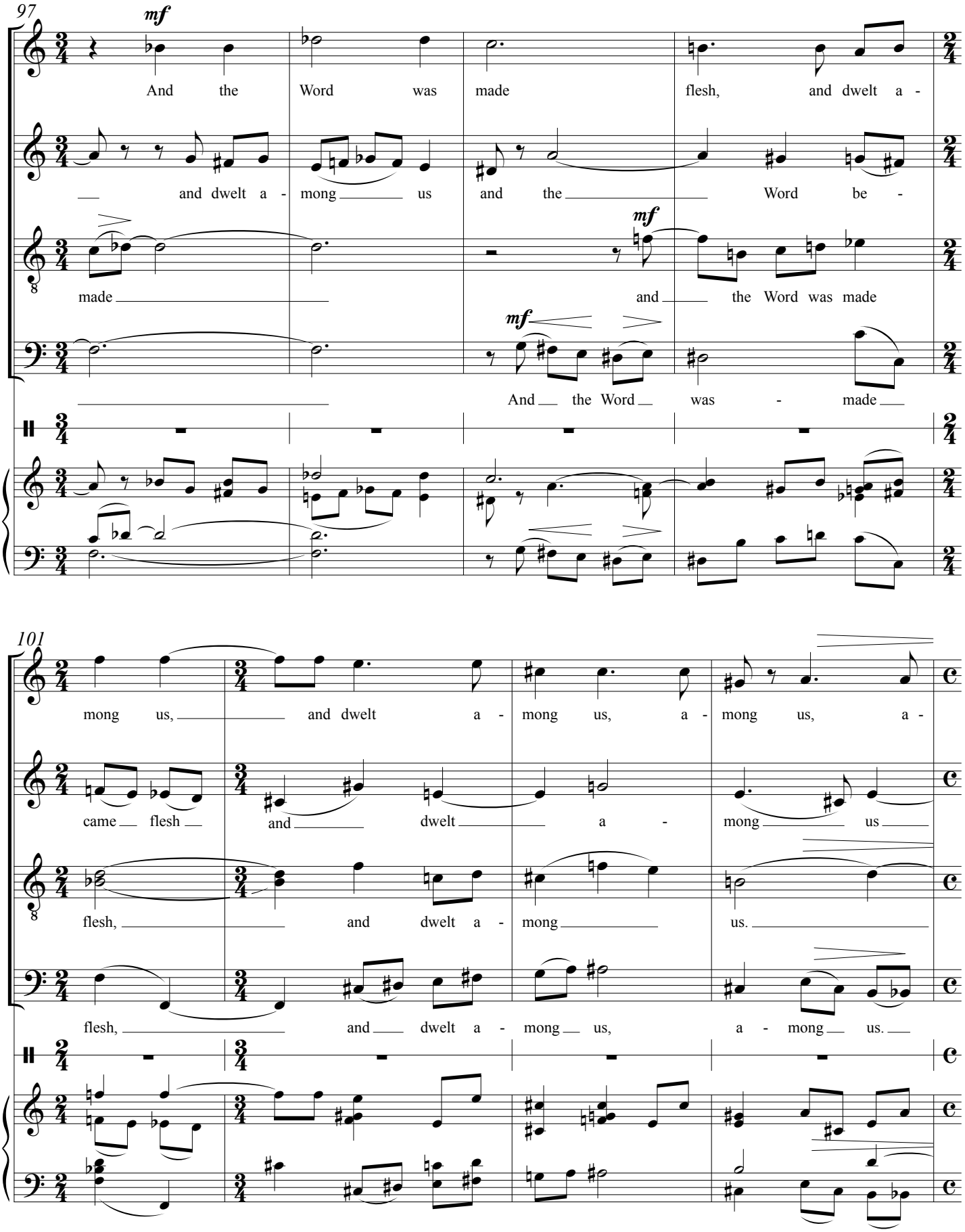

53
out of blood, out of blood
born, not out of blood, out of blood
mp
which were born, not out of blood
mp
57
accel.
Più mosso ♩ = c. 82
rit.
ff
blood blood, nor of the will of the
blood blood, nor of the will of the
blood blood, nor of the will of the
mp
which were born, not out of blood, nor of the will of the

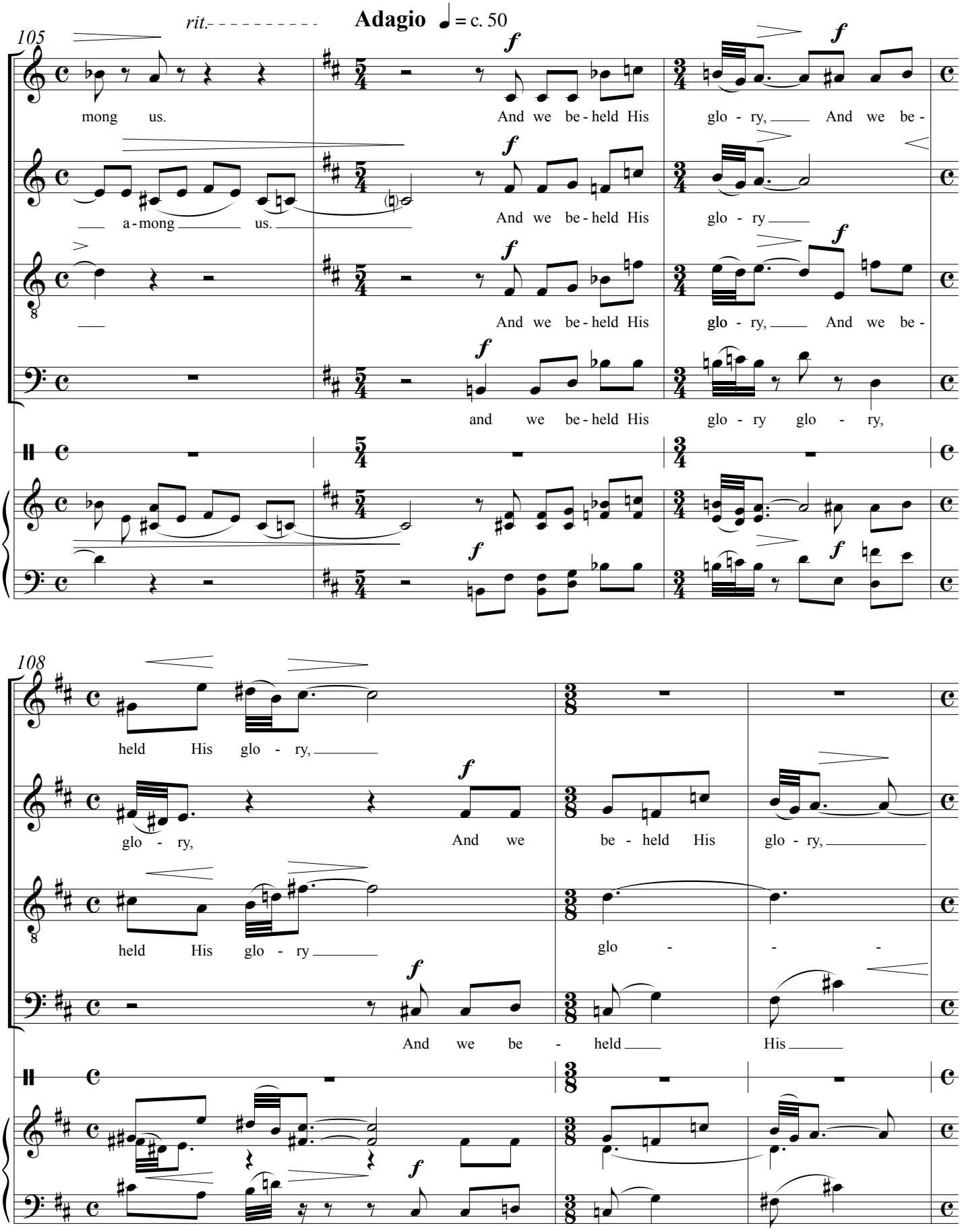

a tempo
Poco meno mosso
62
66
flesh, of the flesh, of the flesh, but of
flesh, nor of the will of man,
flesh, nor of the will of man,
flesh, but of
God of God.
of God of of God.
God of God of

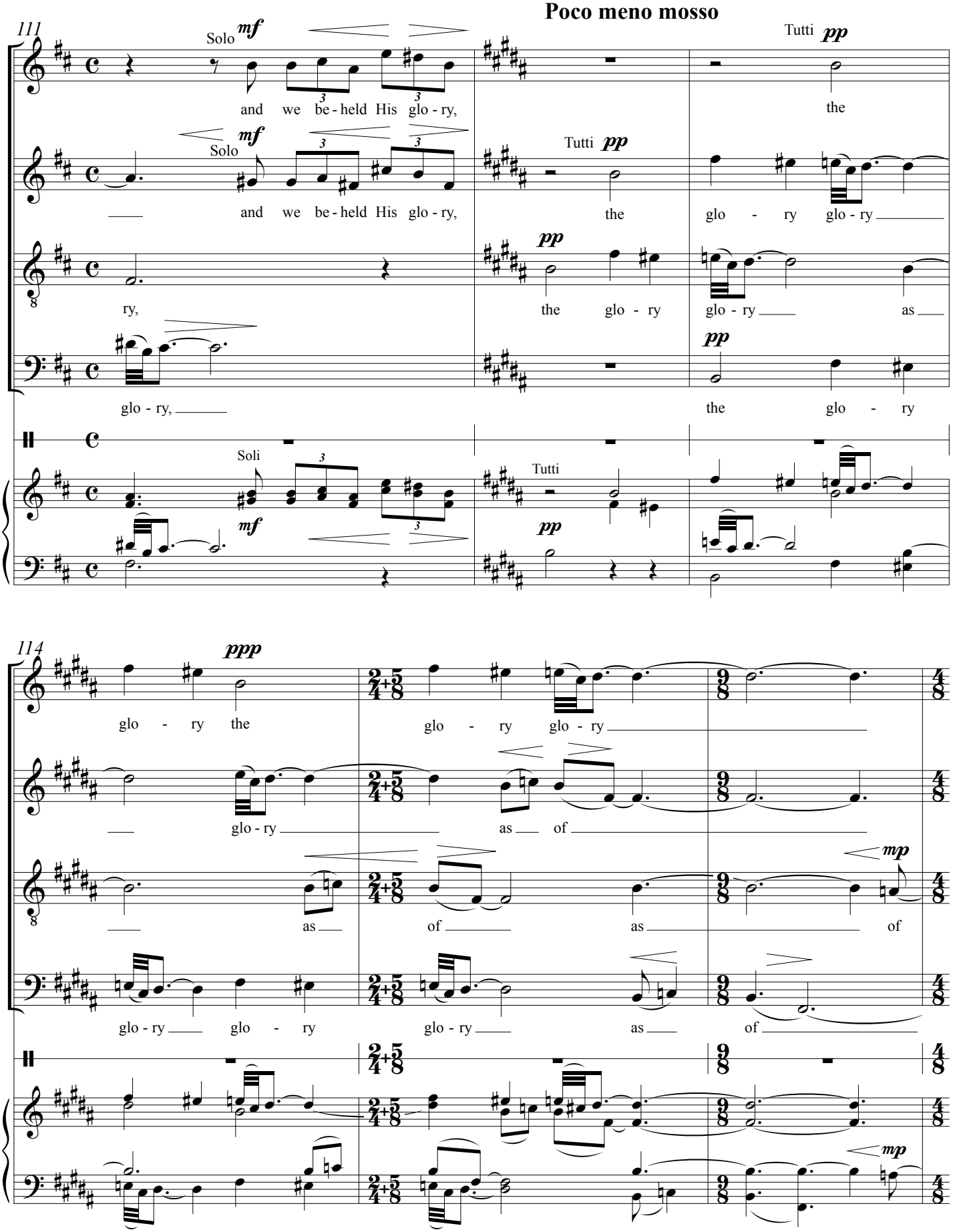

F Andante ♩ = c. 74
71
mf
And the Word was made
And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us - and we beheld His Glory - the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father - full of grace and truth.
mf

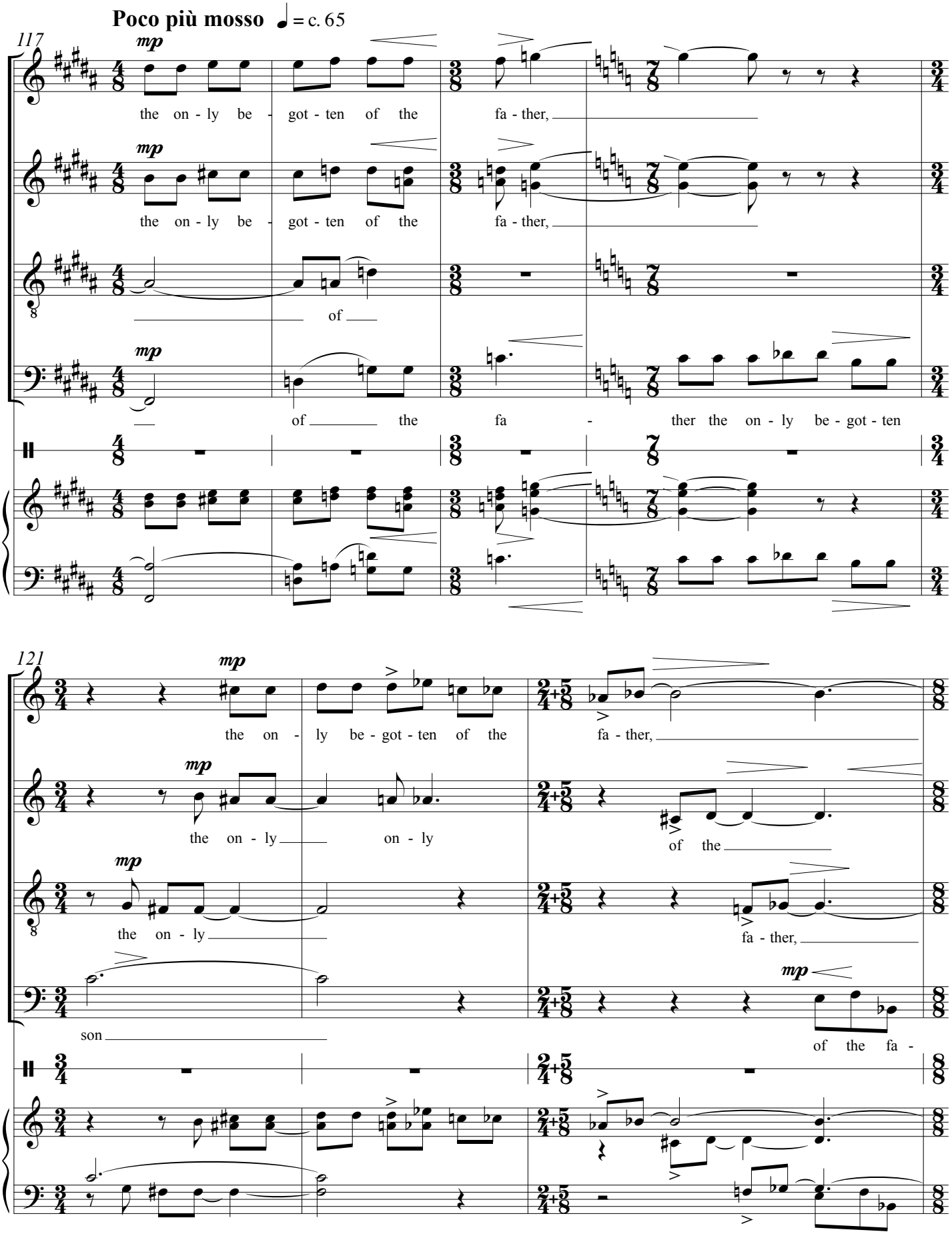

76
mf
And the
flesh, and dwelt a - mong us and dwelt a - mong us a - mong us a - mong us a -
82
mp sub.
Word was made flesh, and dwelt a - mong us and dwelt a -
mong us a - mong us and the Word was made flesh, and

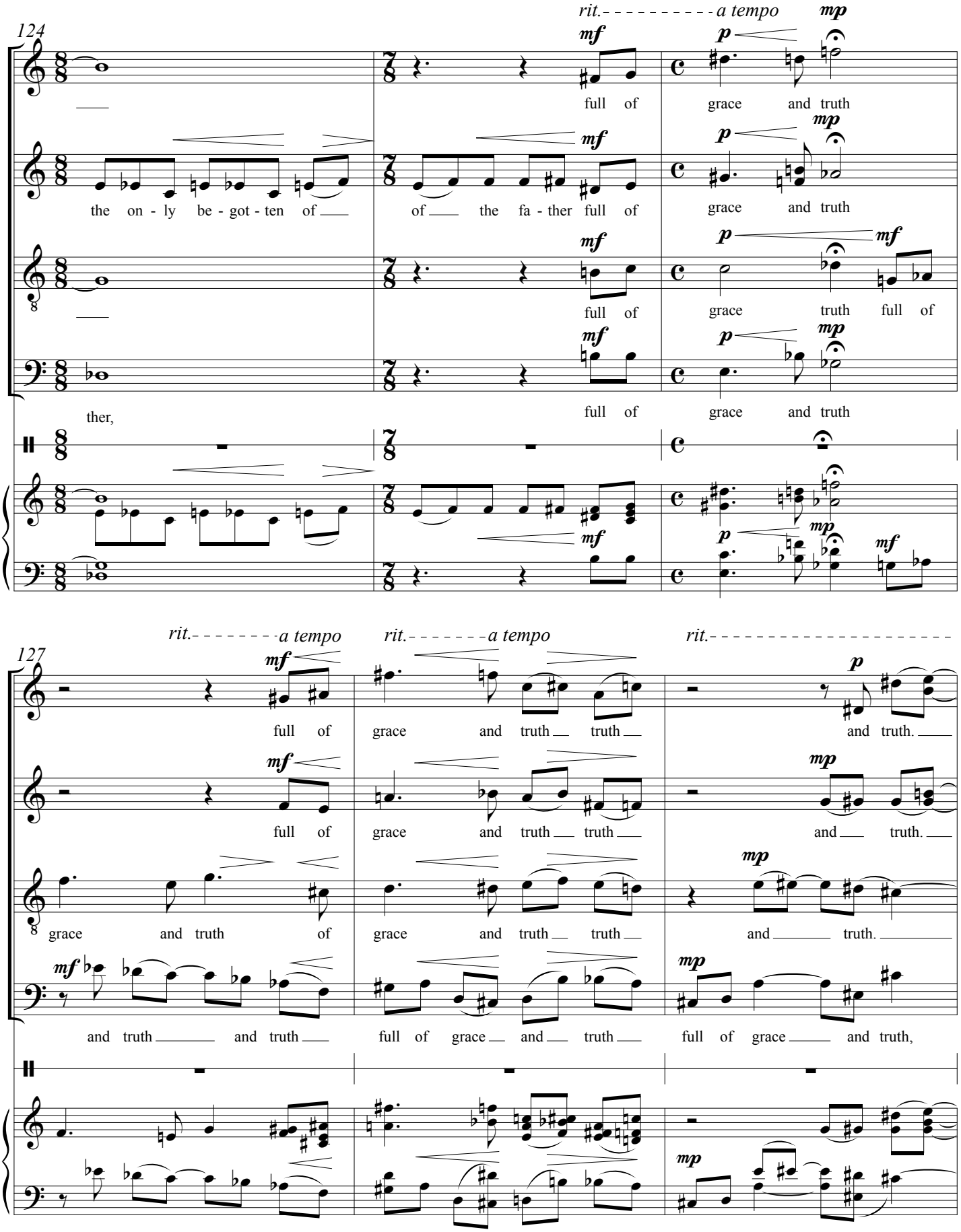

87
mf
And the Word was made
mong us a - mong us,
And the Word was made
dwelt a - mong a - mong us,
And the
92
flesh, and dwelt a - mong us, and dwelt and dwelt a - mong us,
flesh, and dwelt a - mong us, and the Word was
Word the Word was made flesh and dwelt a-mong us us,
p

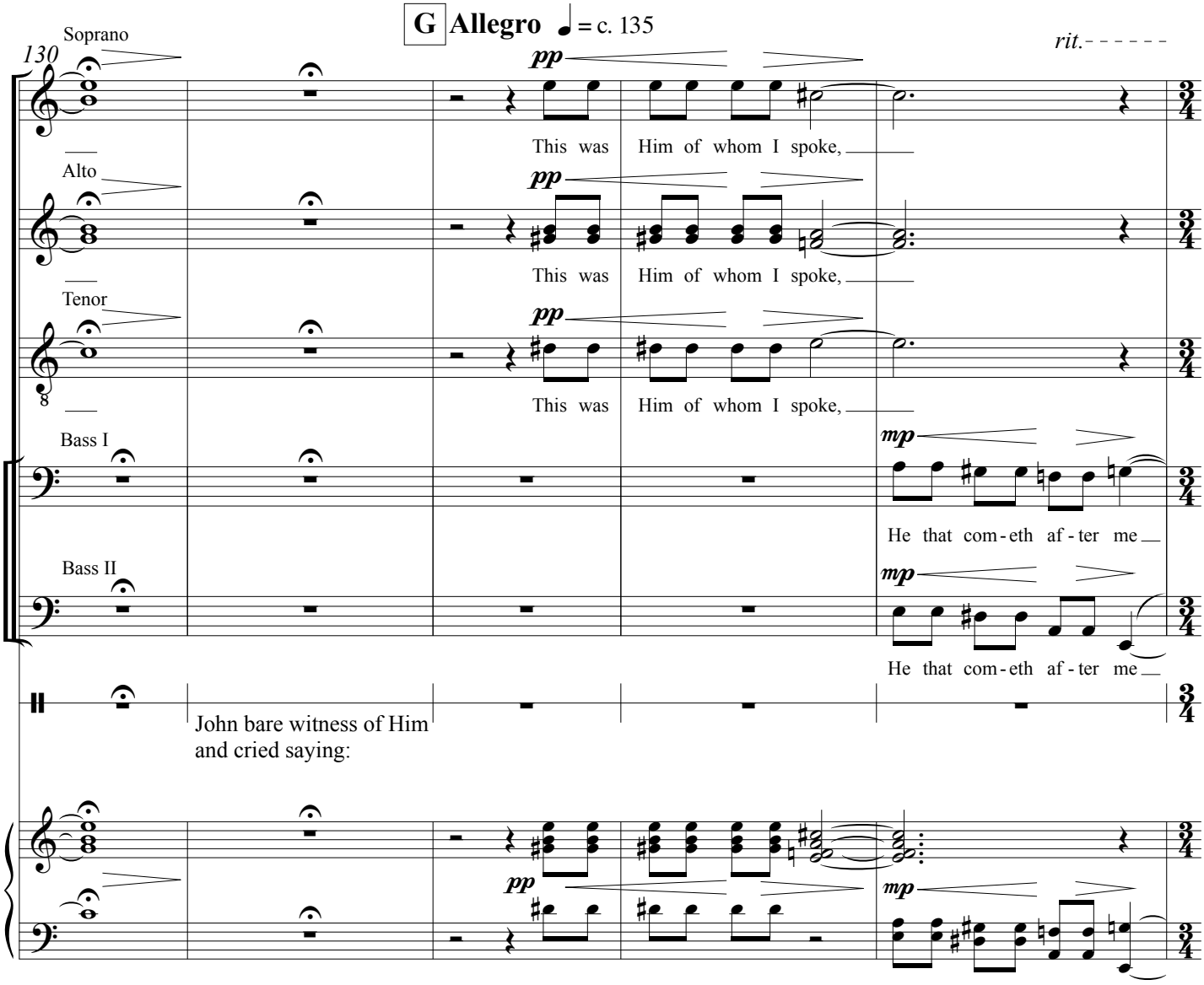

97
mf
And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt a -
and dwelt a - mong us and the Word be -
made
mf
and the Word was made
mf
And the Word was - made
101
mong us, and dwelt a - mong us, a - mong us, a -
came flesh and dwelt a - mong us
flesh, and dwelt a - mong us.
flesh, and dwelt a - mong us, a - mong us.

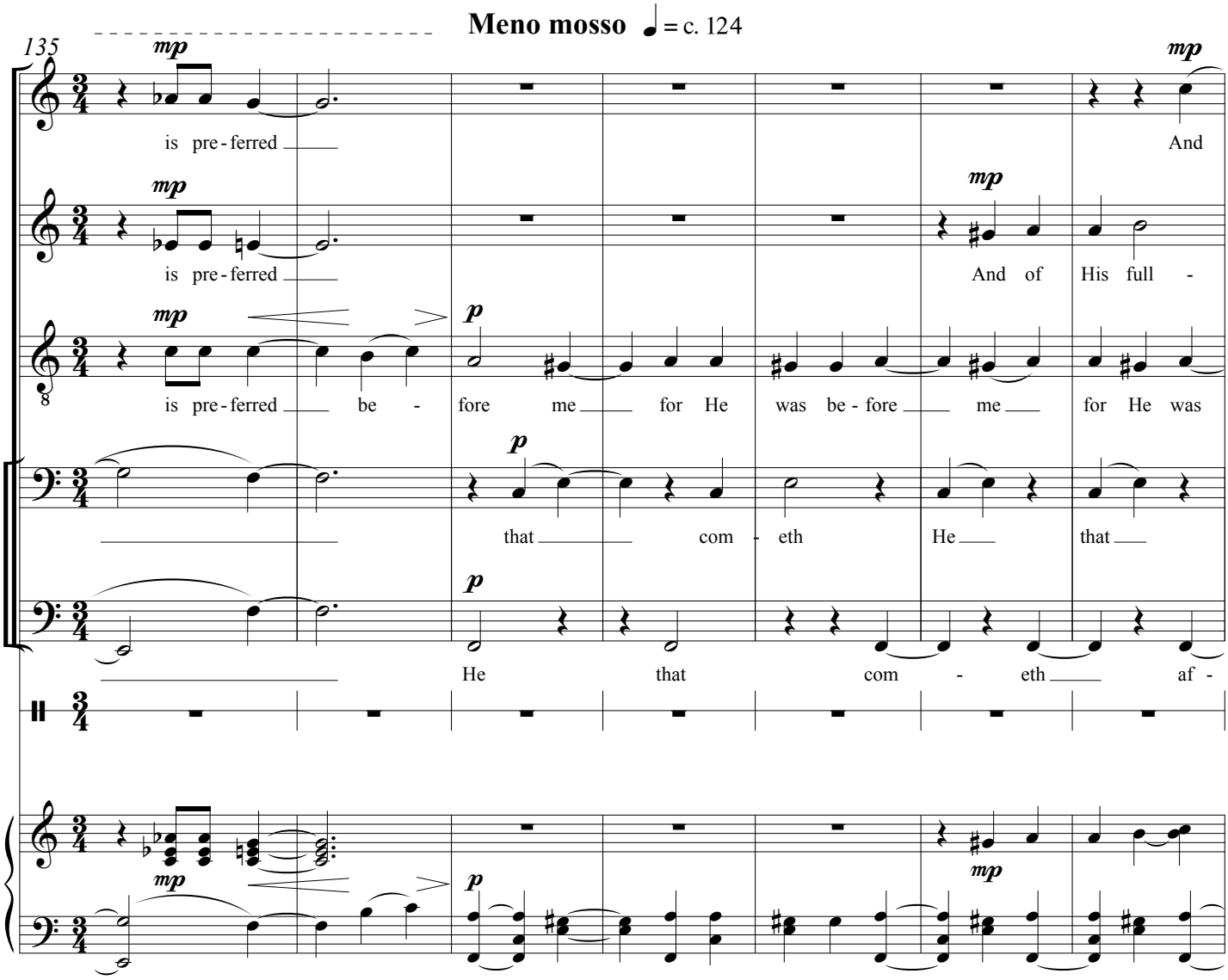

rit.
Adagio ♩ = c. 50
105
mong us.
And we be - held His glo - ry, And we be -
a - mong us.
And we be - held His glo - ry
And we be - held His glo - ry, And we be -
and we be - held His glo - ry glo - ry,
108
held His glo - ry,
glo - ry, And we be - held His glo - ry,
held His glo - ry
glo - - -
And we be - held His

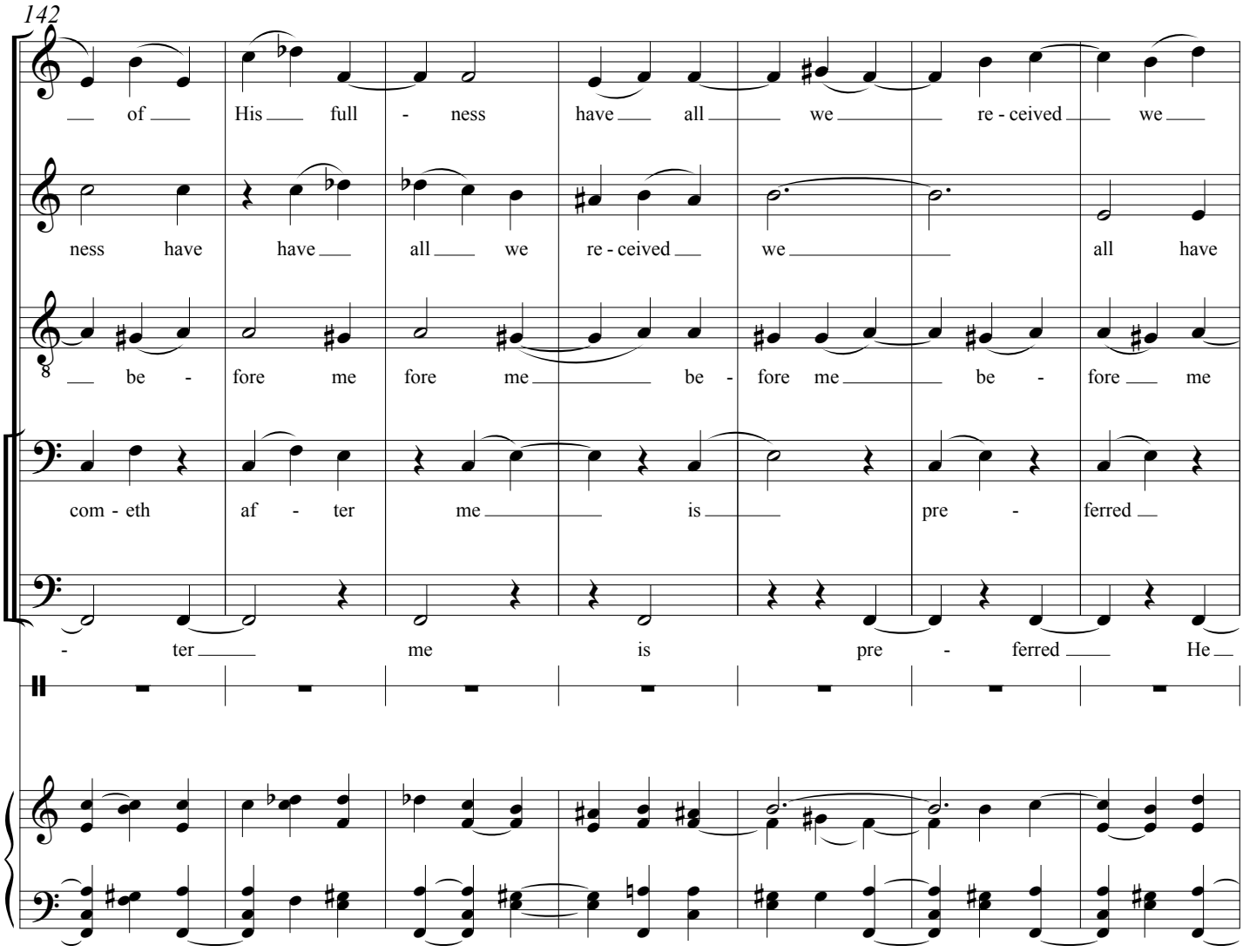

Poco meno mosso
111
Solo
mf
and we be-held His glo-ry,
Tutti
pp
the
glo - ry glo - ry
as
glo - ry,
Soli
Tutti
114
ppp
glo - ry the
glo - ry glo - ry
as of
mp
as of as of
glo - ry glo - ry glo - ry as of

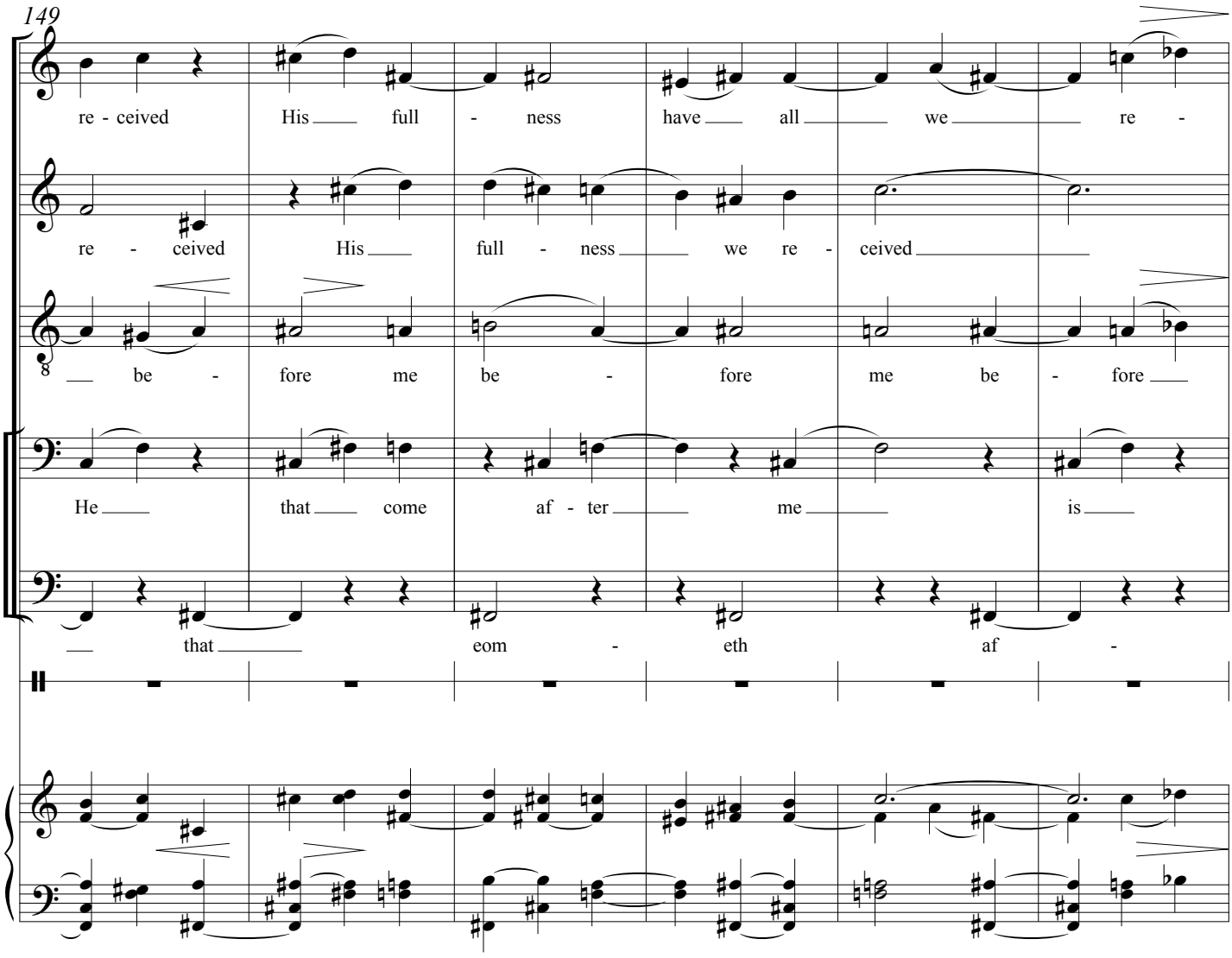

Poco più mosso ♩ = c. 65
117
mp
the on - ly be - got - ten of the fa - ther,
the on - ly be - got - ten of the fa - ther,
of
of the fa - ther the on - ly be - got - ten
121
mp
the on - ly be - got - ten of the fa - ther,
the on - ly on - ly
of the
the on - ly
fa - ther,
son
of the fa -

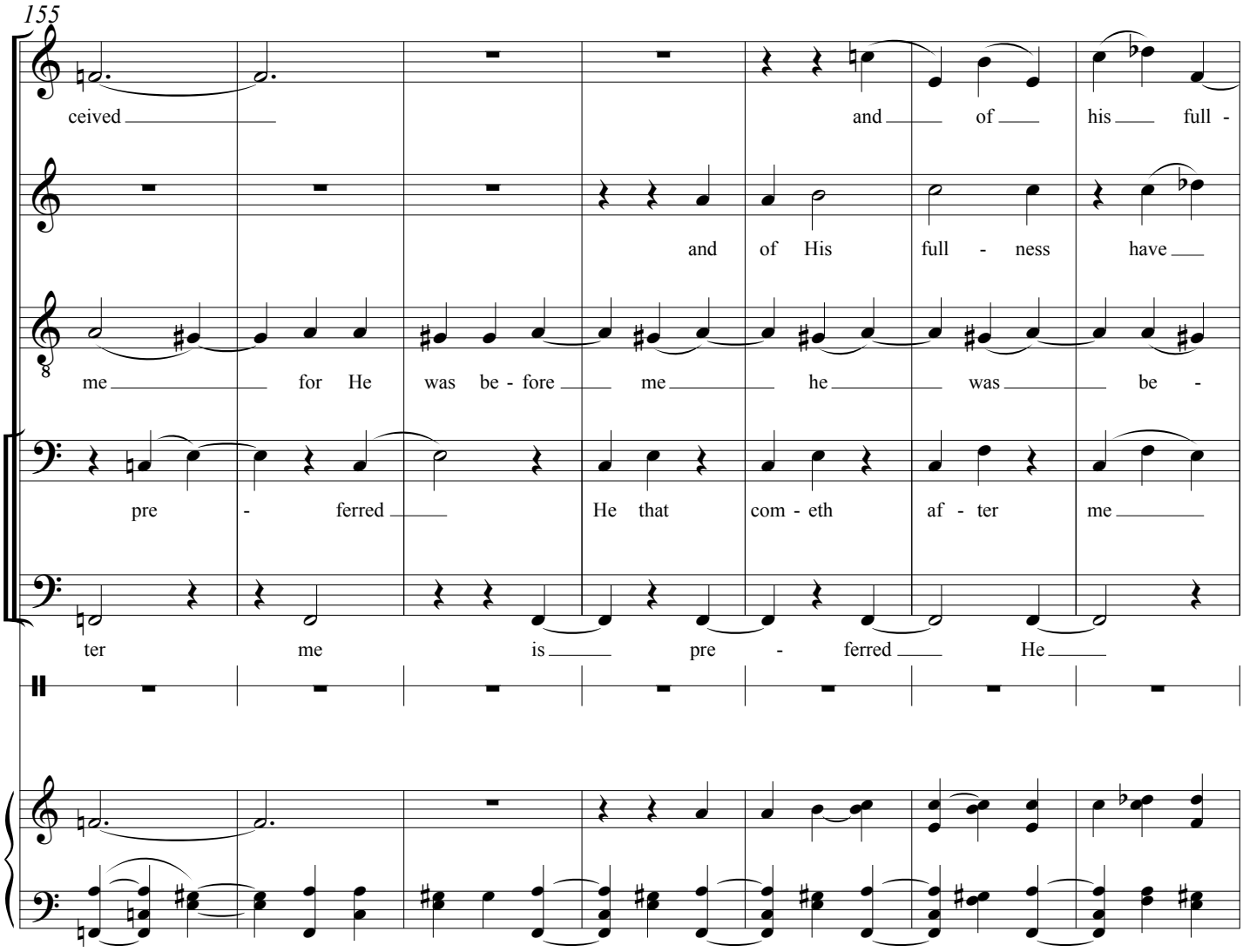

124
rit.
a tempo
mf
p
mp
full of
grace and truth
the on - ly be - got - ten of
of the fa - ther full of
grace and truth
grace truth full of
ther,
127
rit.
a tempo
rit.
grace and truth of
and truth
full of grace and truth
and truth.
and truth,

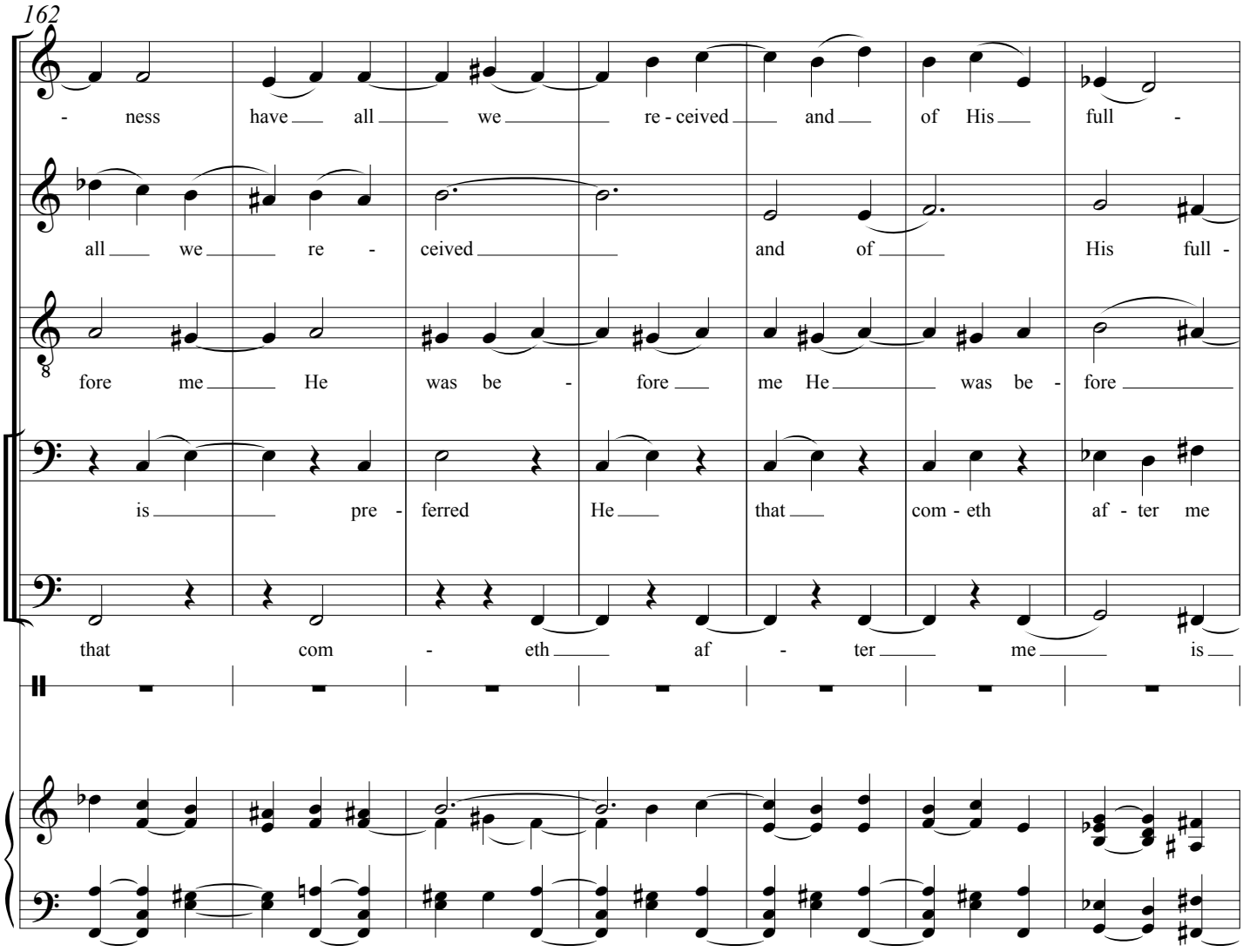

G Allegro ♩= c. 135
130
Soprano
Alto
Tenor
Bass I
Bass II
pp
mp
This was Him of whom I spoke,
He that com-eth af-ter me
John bare witness of Him
and cried saying:
rit.

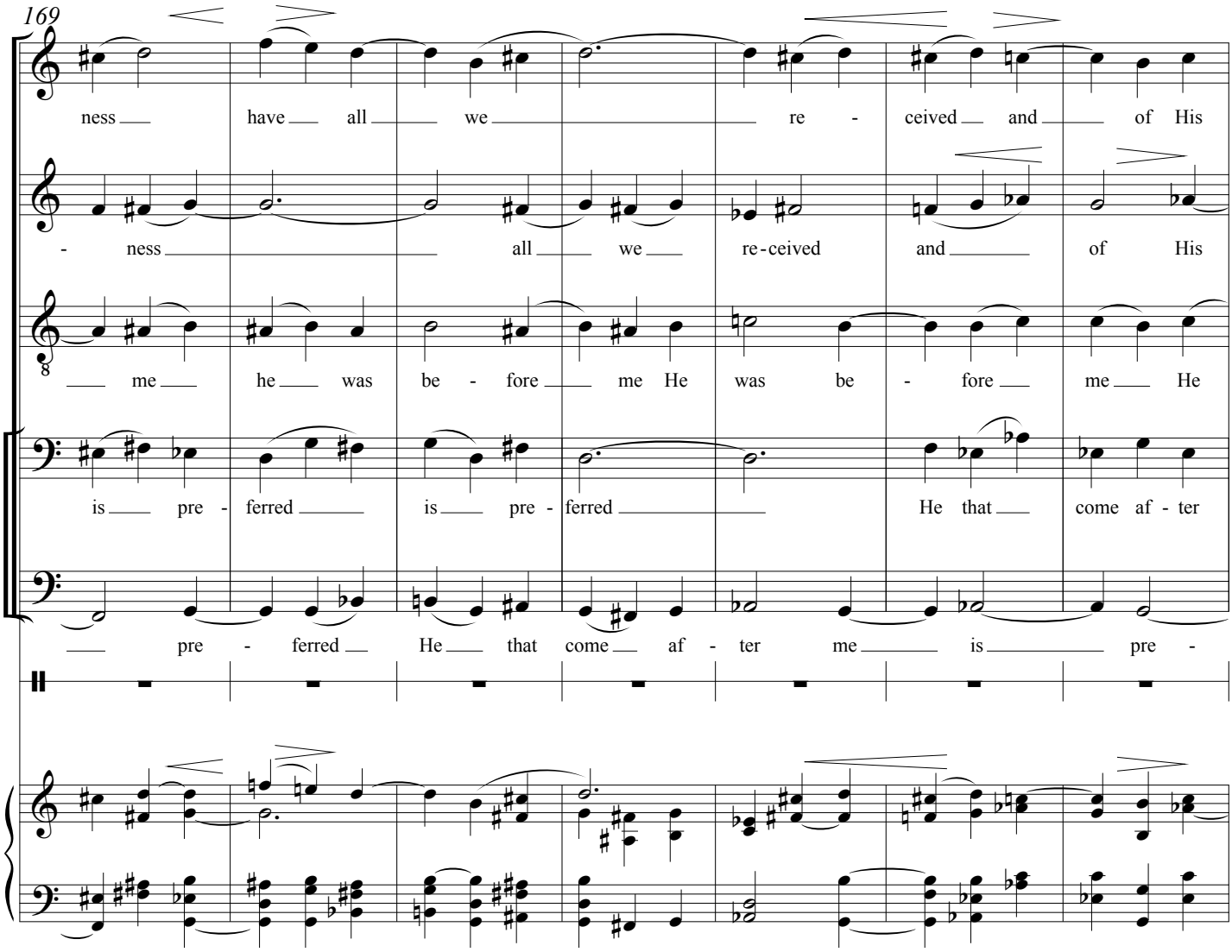

Meno mosso ♩ = c. 124
135
mp
is pre - ferred
And
is pre - ferred
And of His full -
is pre - ferred be - fore me for He was be - fore me for He was
p
that com - eth He that
He that com - eth af -

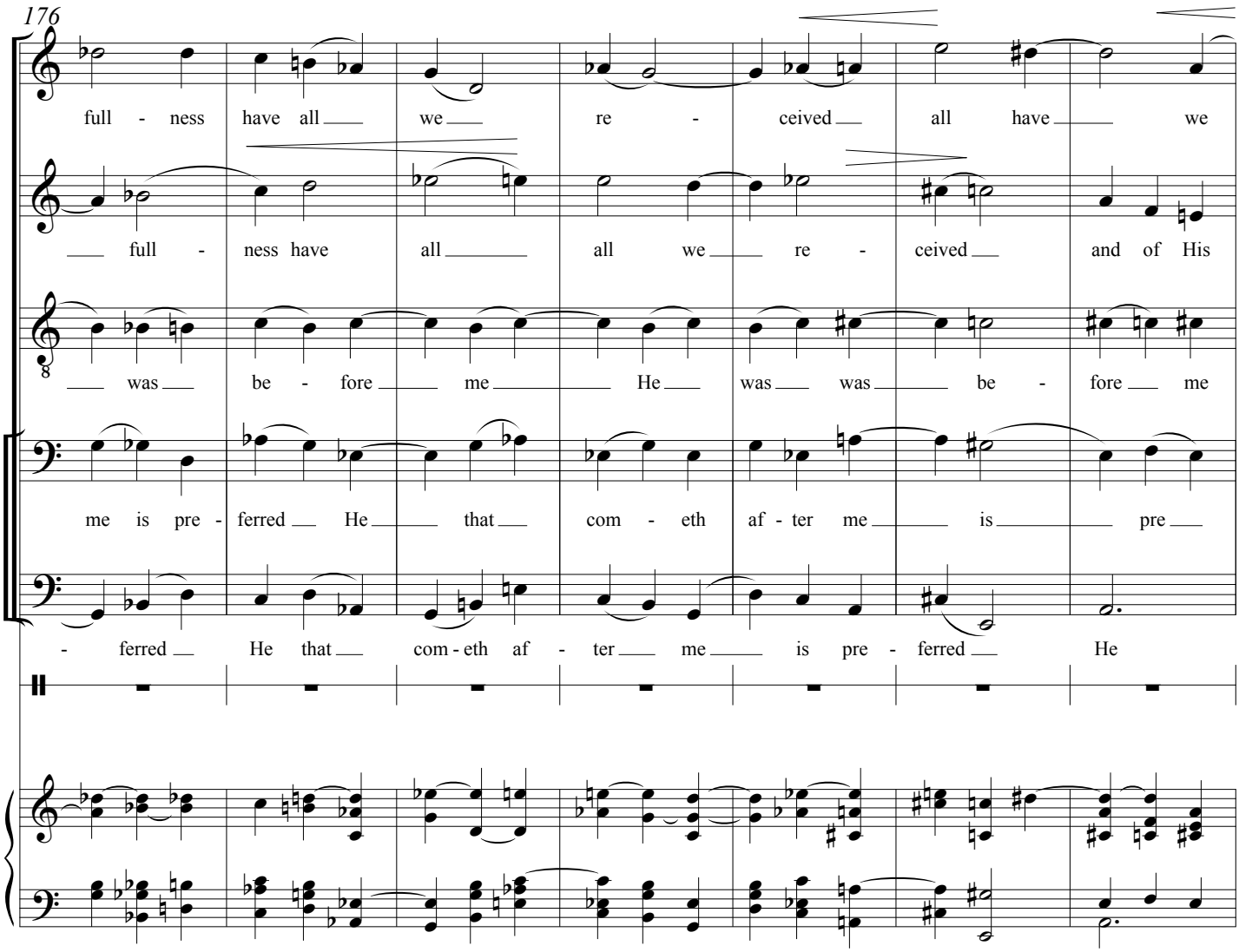

142
of His full - ness have all we re - ceived we
ness have have all we re - ceived we all have
be - fore me fore me be - fore me be - fore me
com - eth af - ter me is pre - ferred
- ter me is pre - ferred He

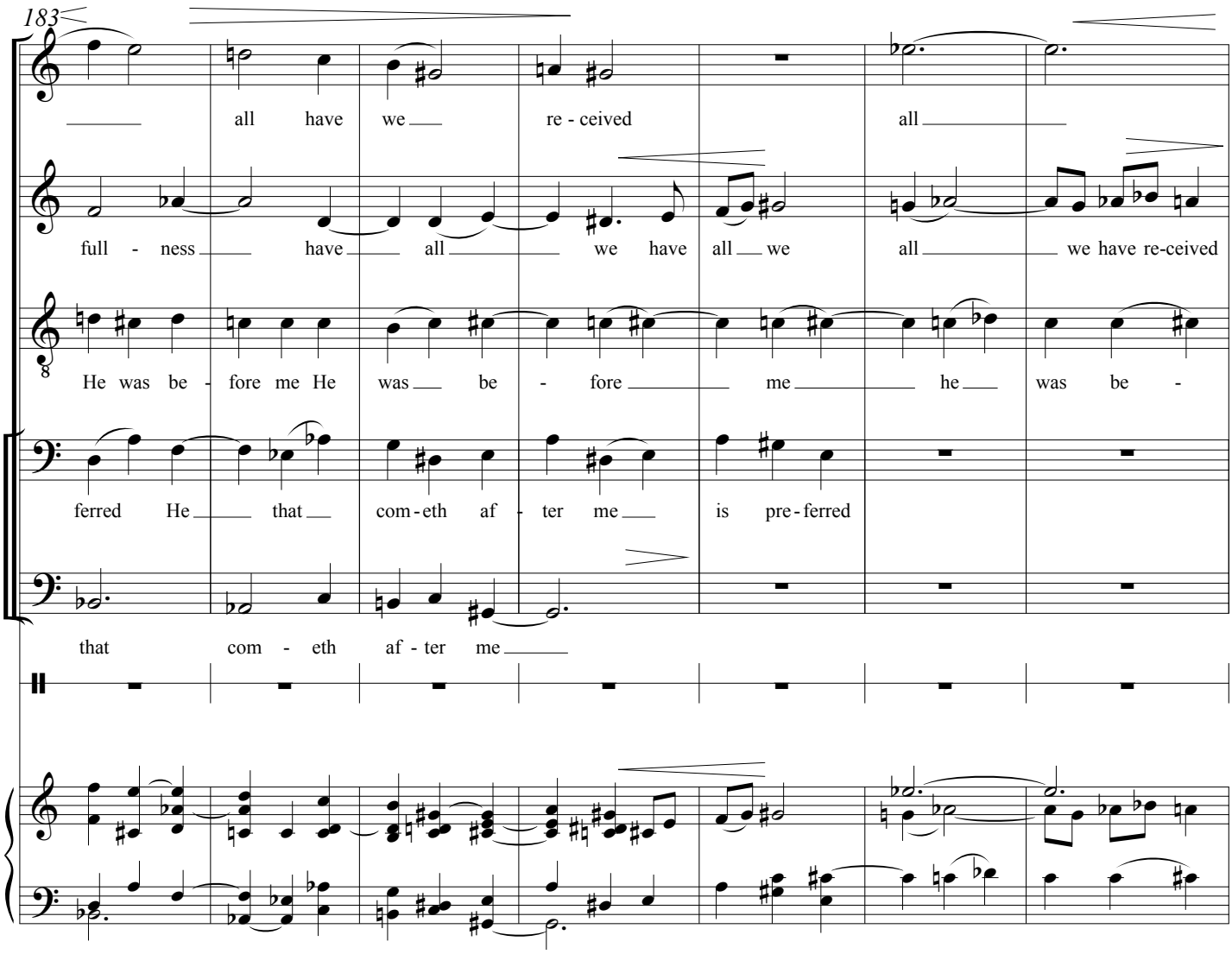

149
re - ceived His full - ness have all we re -
re - ceived His full - ness we re - ceived
be - fore me be - fore me be - fore
He that come af - ter me is
that eom - eth af -

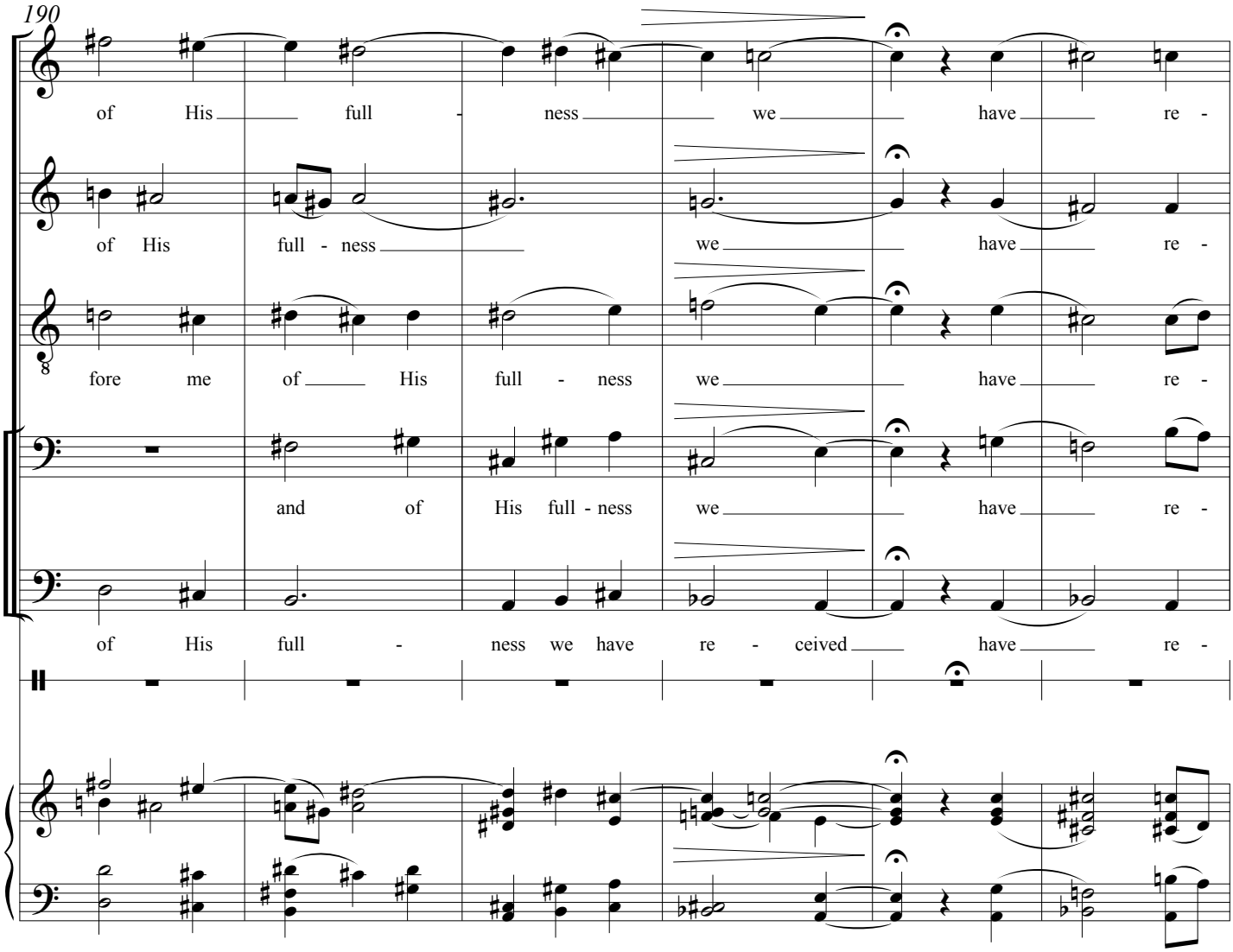

155
ceived
and of his full -
and of His full - ness have
me for He was be - fore me he was be -
pre - ferred He that com - eth af - ter me
ter me is pre - ferred He

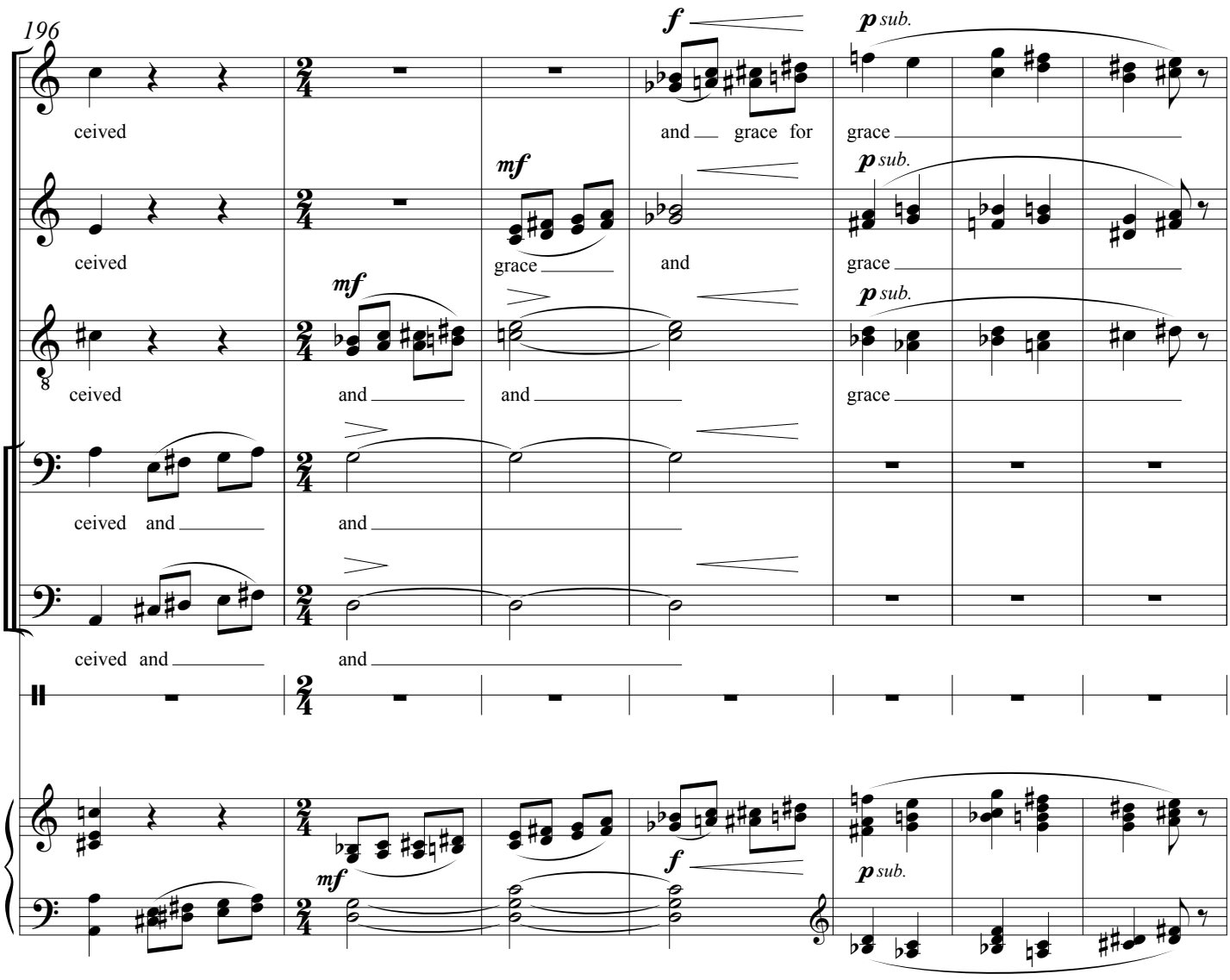

162
- ness have all we re - ceived and of His full -
all we re - ceived and of His full -
fore me He was be - fore me He was be - fore
is pre - ferred He that com - eth af - ter me
that com - eth af - ter me is

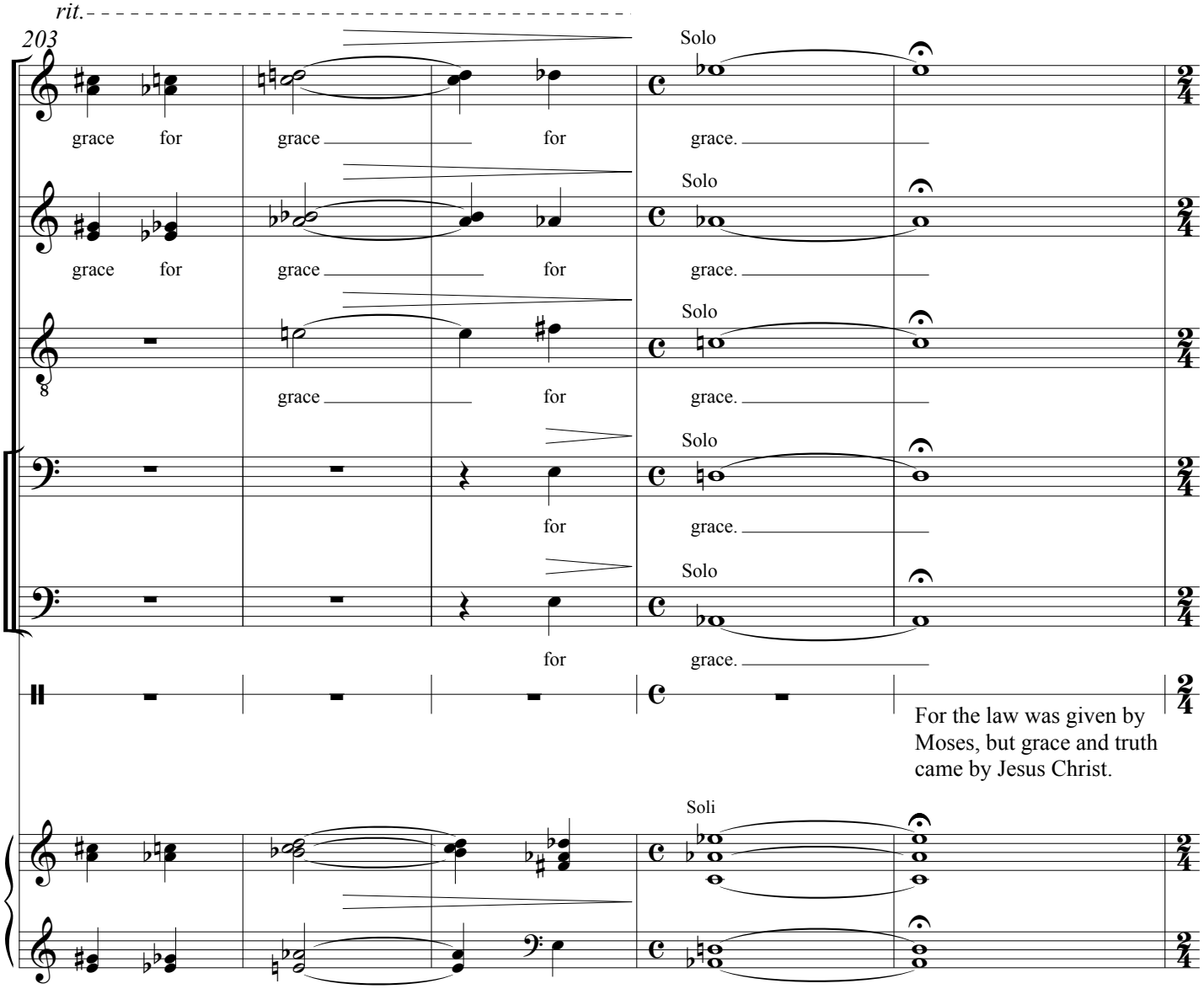

169
ness have all we re - ceived and of His
- ness all we re-ceived and of His
me he was be - fore me He was be - fore me He
is pre - ferred is pre - ferred He that come af - ter
pre - ferred He that come af - ter me is pre -

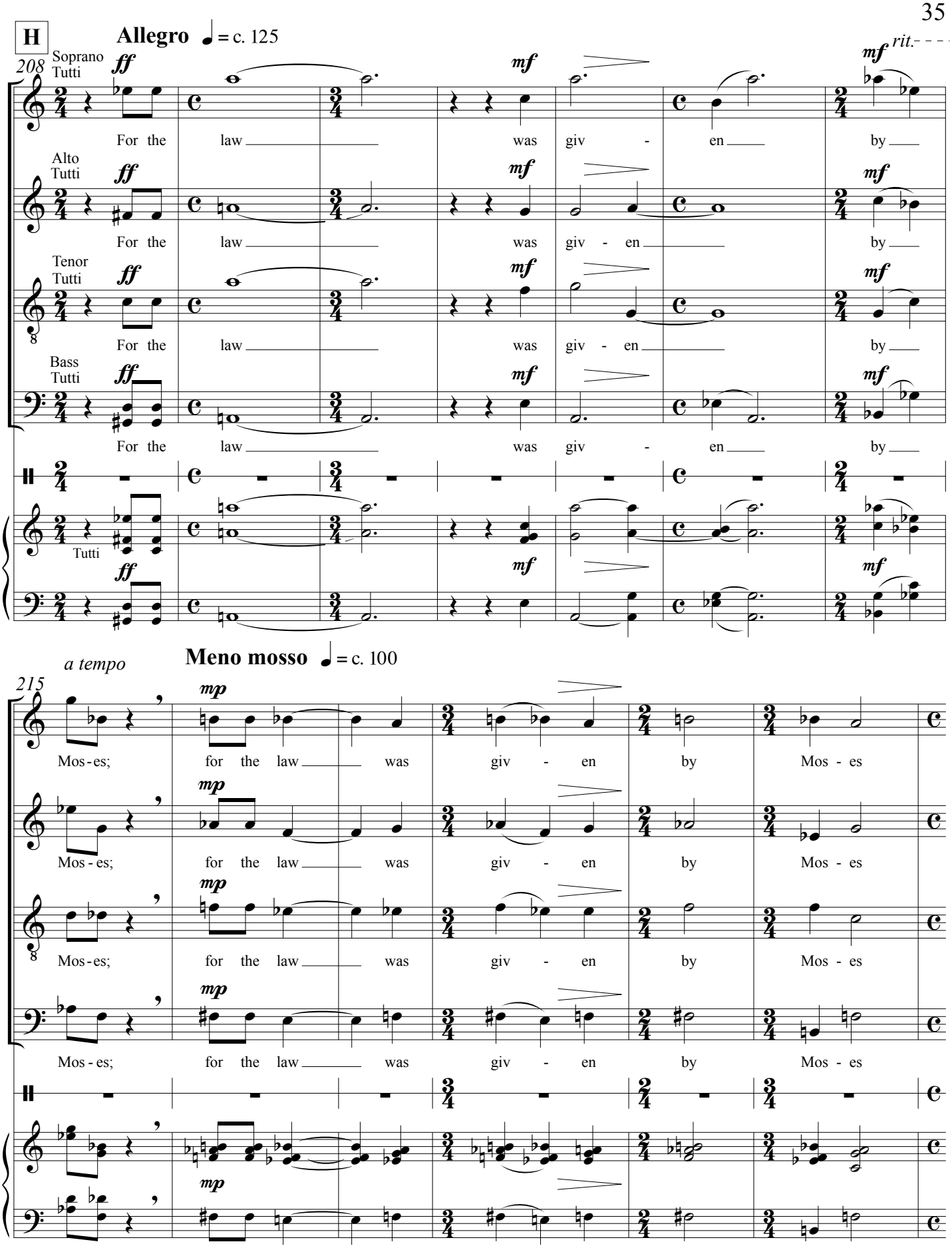

176
full - ness have all we re - ceived all have we
full - ness have all all we re - ceived and of His
was be - fore me He was was be - fore me
me is pre - ferred He that com - eth af - ter me is pre
- ferred He that com - eth af - ter me is pre - ferred He

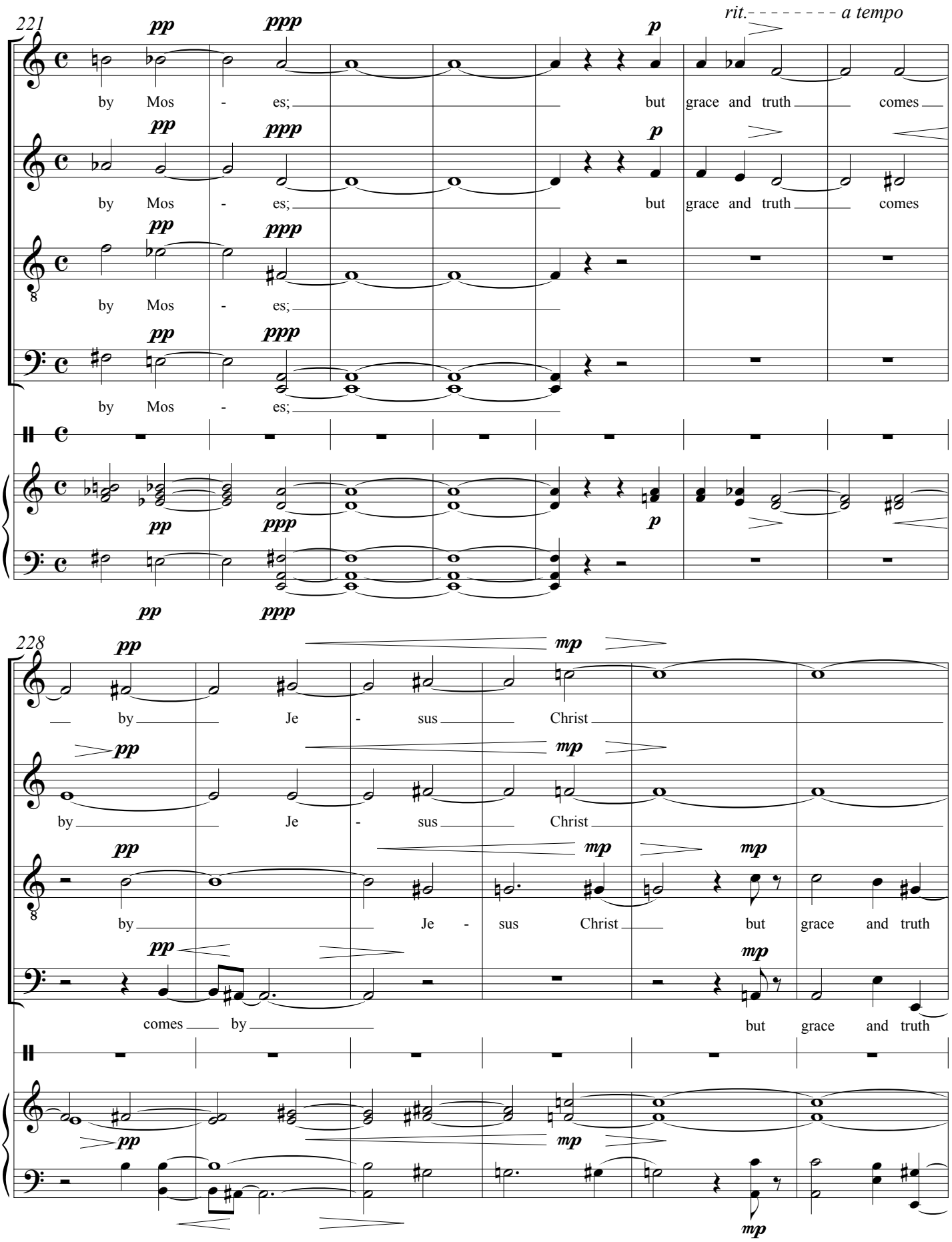

183
all have we re - ceived all
full - ness have all we have all we all we have re-ceived
He was be - fore me He was be - fore me he was be -
ferred He that com - eth af - ter me is pre - ferred
that com - eth af - ter me

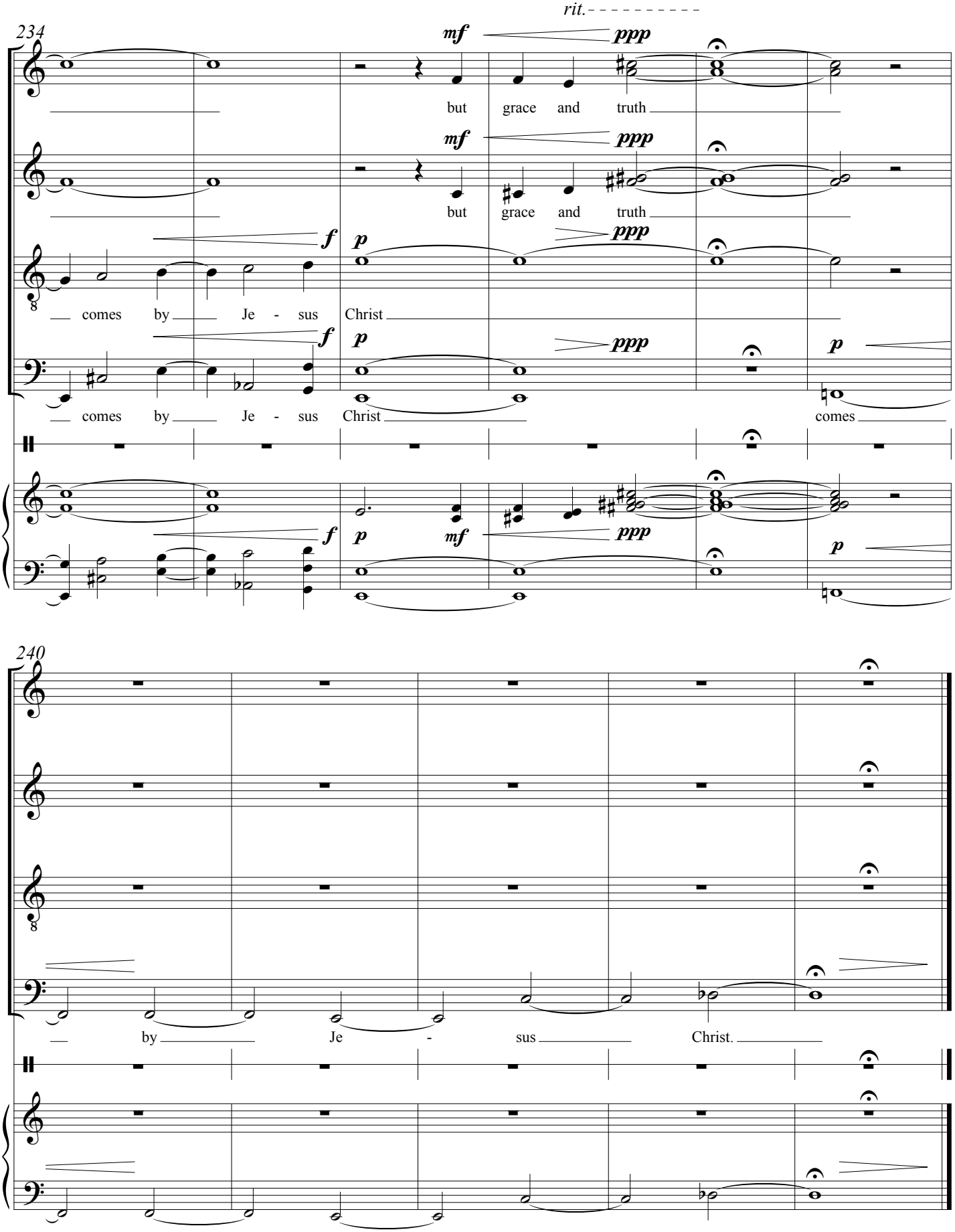

190
of His full - ness we have re -
of His full - ness we have re -
fore me of His full - ness we have re -
and of His full - ness we have re -
of His full - ness we have re - ceived have re -


196
ceived
and grace for
grace
ceived
grace
and
grace
ceived
and
and
grace
ceived and
and
ceived and
and
f
p sub.
mf
mf
mf
f
p sub.


rit.
203
Solo
grace for grace for grace.
Solo
grace for grace for grace.
Solo
grace for grace.
Solo
for grace.
Solo
for grace.
For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.
Soli


H
Allegro ♩ = c. 125
208
Soprano Tutti
Alto Tutti
Tenor Tutti
Bass Tutti
Tutti
ff
mf
rit.
For the law was giv - en by
a tempo
Meno mosso ♩ = c. 100
215
mp
Mos-es; for the law was giv - en by Mos - es


221
rit.
a tempo
pp
ppp
p
by Mos - es;
but grace and truth comes
228
mp
by Je - sus Christ
but grace and truth
comes by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234
mf
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but grace and truth
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comes by Je - sus Christ
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240
by Je - sus Christ.