Good morning and welcome to the salute to the fallen soldier tribute. Following the mass there will be a collection at the exits for the Wounded Warrior Project.

A sad part of military etiquette is honoring service members who have fallen in the line of duty. Remembering them honors their sacrifice and that of their families. It also underscores the importance of the commitment to duty made by the living. One beautiful, thoughtful way to honor those who have died is a Fallen Soldier Table. Each element on the table symbolizes something specific.

Table: a table set for one is small symbolizing the frailty of one isolated prisoner. The table is round to represent everlasting concern on the part of the survivors for their missing loved ones.

The tablecloth: the tablecloth is white symbolizing purity of their intentions to respond to their country’s call to arms.

A single rose: a single rose in a vase signifies the blood that many have shed in sacrifice to ensure the freedom of our beloved United States of America. This rose also reminds us of our beloved family and friends or our missing comrades who keep the faith, while awaiting their return.

Yellow ribbon: the yellow ribbon around the vase represents the yellow ribbon worn on the lapels of the thousands who demand with unyielding determination a proper accounting of our comrades who are not among us tonight.

A slice of lemon: the slice of lemon on a bread plate represents the bitter fate of the missing.

Salt: the salt sprinkled on the bread plate symbolizes of the countless fallen tears of families as they wait.

Inverted glass: this glass inverted on the table represents the fact that the missing and fallen cannot partake of the food and drink set at the table.

The Bible: the Bible represents the spiritual strength and faith to sustain those lost from our country.

A lit candle: the lit candle is reminiscent of the light of hope which lives in our hearts to illuminate their way home, away from their captors, to open the arms of a grateful nation.

Empty chair: the empty chair represents the missing and fallen aren’t present.