Well brother, one down and one to go. As the old man would say, “another Thanksgiving shot to hell.” You’re going to be surprised but I am slowly accepting a break in tradition as long as the family stays together. This year’s dinner had no macaroni, no sweet potatoes, no string bean casserole, no rolls and an elimination of the usual pies and pastries. Those yearly items were replaced by other “scrumptious” delicacies.

There were roasted carrots and string beans, salad with apples, cranberries, and nuts (I’m not sure if that classifies as a fruit salad), and brussels sprouts. The antipasto had no prosciutto, ham, salami or cheese. There were homemade giardinera, pickled and roasted peppers, olives artichoke hearts, Emeril LaGasse pickled mushrooms and my legendary stuffed peppers had to be made with no bread crumbs (I should have just put out a bowl of tuna fish). For dessert, my daughter-in-law (usually not a culinary artist), honored us with an ice cream made with zucchini and cashews, and an apple crisp made with apples and nuts. We also had a sugar free pumpkin/sweet potato pie.

I think I have come a long way eating zucchini ice cream. But is was very good. We did have the traditional Christmas pjs, donated and designed by Gina (see page 1).

Well, now comes our preparations for Christmas. With you guys gone and Frankie and Ana heading to Brazil, I have made great changes is the menu. The feast of the seven fishes might become the feast of the fast. There will be no fish sauce, no baccala salad, no antipasto and of course no macaroni. The new meal with be soup, shrimp (I got one fish in there), ham and a roast. Are you feeling mom and dad moving the earth next to you as they roll over in their graves? Nobody eats any of that “good”stuff any more.

To make matters worse, the administrators of our new parish (which combined the churches in New Haven), has decided (without our contribution to the conversation), that we will not have our traditional Vigil Mass on Christmas Eve. That eliminates our annual pageant put on by our CCD class and my 30 year of Oh Holy Night solo. Another disappointing kick in the crotch to traditions.

But it’s all good. I’m a man who rolls with the punches (even the kicks in the crotch). You would be surprised. You always told me I should have been the oldest with my inability to let tradition go and my hold on the “old school” ways. I am proud of the fact that I was able to do that for so long and I will continue to attempt that but deal with it a little better when things I can’t control are changed.

We will still get the family together and I will make more visits to ailing friends and family bringing my “special talents” to their homes for the holidays.

Well that’s pretty much it. Break the news to mom, dad and Mary in bits and pieces. I don’t think they can handle it all at once. I wonder what Mary would say about zucchini ice cream. Take care and I’ll see you soon.