Today is the day that many people all over the world celebrate being Irish, whether or not they are. Tradition claims St Patrick brought Catholicism to Ireland. Most holidays honor the birth of a noted figure in history, but St Patrick’s Day honors the death of Ireland’s Patron Saint.

Irish lore suggests that St Patrick introduced the three-leaf clover (shamrock) to Ireland, although there are no facts to support that claim. Whatever the origin of the small green plant, it has been for years the iconic representation of all things Irish.

People in Ireland traditionally attend mass wearing a bouquet of shamrocks on their “Sunday-Go-To-Meeting” clothes and most pubs in Ireland are closed for the day. At church the “Blessing of the Shamrocks” is performed by Priests or Bishops.

St Patrick’s Day parties and parades are favorite ways Americans celebrate the day. Wearing green and drinking green beer are also popular among Americans.

In recent years these US-inspired customs have spread across the waves to Ireland, where some pubs have begun staying open on St Pat’s Day.
As a way to encourage tourism, in 1995 the Irish government began holding the St Patrick’s Festival, which is a five-day event of shows, plays, concerts, fairs and the St Patrick’s Day Parade.

Well, Holy Shamrocks! May you always have the “luck o’ the Irish!”