



By Carolyn Lee
The Imperial Republican

Almost a year ago, Chris Barger of Imperial and Gisele Maria Cardoso Zarzana of Sao Paulo, Brazil connected on Ave Maria Singles, a Catholic dating website. Today (Thursday) they are celebrating their first Valentine's Day as a married couple.

Chris, 42, said he felt right away that they were made for each other.

Gisele, 30, on the other hand "didn't believe easily" that Chris was the one for her. They started praying together on Skype, and their relationship deepened over the Internet.

Chris was attracted to Gisele's "beauty, morals and faith."

She said she started reading about Chris, and "It came to my heart." He was a cheerful, honest person who loves nature, she added.



Gisele traveled to Imperial the end of June, staying through August and getting to know Chris' family and daughter Sarah, 10. As her mother grew up on a farm, "We identify ourselves with their family."

Next, Chris traveled to Brazil to meet Gisele's family in November. They were married Jan. 5 in Sao Paulo with his parents and brother Steve attending, as well as Father Bernard Lorenz of St. Patrick Catholic Church in Imperial.

After honeymooning on the beach at Cambury, Brazil, where the couple learned to surf, they returned to Imperial Jan. 25.

It was hard for Gisele to leave her parents for another country.

"I cried, but I knew God had prepared me for something." She added that people have received her with love here.

Chris drives a truck for a living. Gisele taught English at an English school and privately in Sao Paulo. Portugese is her native language, and she enjoys learning other languages.

She has already been called to substitute teach at Chase County Schools, and helps with music at St. Pat's.

The Bargers were asked the benefits of website dating services. Chris responded that if you're busy, "It's real convenient. It's a nice, slow way to get to know somebody."

Gisele said there is no benefit for other websites, but Ave Maria Singles "takes faith into consideration. You have to have Jesus in the center" of your life.

And, as Chris observed while smiling at his new bride, "Love has no boundaries."