

Criminal serving his sentence with monks pleads to be sent back to prison... because monastery life is too hard

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2081757/Criminal-serving-sentence-monks-pleads-sent-prison--monastery-life-hard.html>

A convicted criminal who was serving out his sentence in a monastery has escaped for the second time and asked to be sent back to prison because life was too tough.

Thief David Catalano, 31, was sent to a Santa Maria degli Angeli community run by Capuchin monks in Sicily last November.

But he found their austere lifestyle too tough to handle and soon escaped. After a short while on the run he was caught by police and sent back.



On Monday he fled for the second time in six weeks, only to swiftly turn himself in at a police station and beg officers to send him back to jail in the nearby town of Nicosia.

He told the stunned policemen: 'Prison is better than being at that hostel run by monks.' A police spokesman said: 'Catalano arrived out of the blue and said there was no way he could stay on with the monks.

'He said it was too tough and he wanted to go back to prison, so we happily obliged and he is now back behind bars serving the rest of his sentence.

'Life with the monks can be pretty tough - there are no mod cons and they are up early and go to bed early. There are no luxuries at the hostel and the monks run a very austere regime.'

The Santa Maria degli Angeli community is based in a monastery near Enna on the island of Sicily.

It has been run as a halfway house by the Capuchin friars for more than 12 years with around 60 prisoners accommodated there as they near the end of their sentences.

The Capuchin order broke from the Franciscans in the 16th century, saying the order had strayed from the tough regime of founder St Francis. They formed an offshoot which focused on living an austere monastic life.

The Capuchin are named after their distinctive pointed hoods and they believe in living a simple and austere life with neither monks nor their monasteries being allowed to own property.

The monks are expected to beg and rely on charity for all of their needs, never keeping more than a few days' worth of food at any given time.

Nobody at the Santa Maria community was available for comment.