

HE Archbishop Theodosius (Atallah) Hanna
Archbishop of Sebaste

Born in 1965 in the Galilean village of Al Rameh, Theodosius (Atallah) Hanna attended local primary and secondary schools before entering the Clerical Patriarchate School in Jerusalem. In 1983 he matriculated at Thessalonica University in Greece in the Faculty of Theology. After graduating with honours, he went on to complete a master's degree and doctorate. In 1991 he was ordained as a deacon and priest in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The late Patriarch Diodoros invested him as Archimandrite, and thereafter he was appointed Head of the Arabic Department for the Orthodox Patriarchate in Jerusalem in which office he acted as a spokesman for the Orthodox Church in Jerusalem and the Holy Land. In addition to these commitments and responsibilities, he also served as preacher in the Patriarchate churches.

Impressed by his remarkable performance in these offices, the late Patriarch Diodoros appointed him Secretary General of the Clerical & Lay Joint Council of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Jerusalem. Thereafter he was appointed professor of Church History and Arab Civilization at the Arab Teachers College in Haifa; and contributed much to the establishment and development of the faculty for seven years. As the founder of the Orthodox Youth Movement in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, he is considered to be the godfather to many of the Christian youth groups in Palestine. As a member of the Composition Committee, he raised the topic of Christian religious education in Arab schools in Israel and participated in the establishment and development of curricula for Palestinian schools. He also supervised the Orthodox religious radio channel known as the Voice of Palestine Radio.

Theodosius is a well-known author, and his articles have been periodically published in various newspapers as well as in local and international magazines. (read complete bio)

He is an active and an effective member of the international ecumenical movement both at local and the regional level who enhanced dialogue in bringing various churches together to work towards Christian unification. In addition, he actively participated in Christian-Muslim dialogue to help foster the spirit of cooperation and unity in Palestine. He participated in the work of the Christian-Islamic group in the Middle East Council of Churches; in this capacity he represented the Jerusalem Patriarchate for this council's Heritage Committee. When the Jerusalem Committee convened in Morocco under the auspices of its President, King Mohammed VI, Theodosius delivered an important speech on behalf of the Christian churches in the Holy Land. As a representative at the Geneva-based World Council of Churches, he participated in a conference held by the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva in which he gave a detailed account on the suffering and violations of human rights inflicted on the Palestinian people.

As a participant in the Islamic summit held in Qatar's capital city of Doha, speaking before an assembly of Arab kings, princes, and presidents, he gave an eloquent and historic speech on behalf of the churches of the Holy Land. This speech is still regarded as one of the most memorable events of the conference.

He was a major participant in the Christian - Islamic meeting in the United Arab Emirates for the wellbeing of Jerusalem as well as in numerous other regional and international meetings on this issue. He has acted as an eloquent and tireless advocate for the Palestinians and for the preservation of their rights in Jerusalem.

In several visits to the US, he has represented the suffering of the Palestinian people before Christian Associations and Human Rights Organizations; in these meetings he has defended Palestinians' right to freedom and self-determination. He has carried the same message to several American universities.

As a representative of the Orthodox Church he attended the Arab Summit held in Amman, Jordan, and also participated in meetings of the Islamic Organization and meetings of foreign ministries held in Qatar. For his passionate commitment and sense of mission he has emerged as an acknowledged authority and respected figure by the Arab League in Cairo.

As a member of the Arab National Unity, he represented Palestine in the conferences held in Beirut and Bahrain. In his visits to Arab and Islamic countries, he has repeatedly and emphatically represented the Palestinian cause as a regional issue of fundamental and urgent importance. In appreciation for his steadfast and indefatigable efforts and the pioneer role he has played over the years in promoting national unity, he was awarded the Palestine Prize. He has received numerous honours and awards from many Arab and Islamic countries as well as from the city of Barcelona where he participated in the jubilee celebrations.

He was a founding member of the General Secretariat of Jerusalem in Beirut, which directs the activities of the Palestinian Welfare Committee of Jerusalem.

Throughout the Holy Land he is regarded as one of the most prominent religious and spiritual leaders and he has inspired personal admiration as well for his practice of Christian virtues and his compassion and devotion to the service of humanity. He served as the chief aide to the late Patriarch Diodoros during his official visits.

Through his emphasis on the true national and cultural traditions of Christianity to educate both visitors and residents alike, he has steadfastly carried out his mission to maintain Palestine's Christian heritage.

As a member of the Palestinian National Committee he helped create a better understanding about Palestine's status in the international law.

On August 22, 2002, he was detained by the Israeli police and brought to Al-Maskobiya prison in Jerusalem for extensive interrogation. Since then for three years, he has been prevented from travelling and he regained his freedom of movement only in 2006. Prior to this arrest, he had been several times interrogated by the Israeli police on suspicion of his political attitudes and activities. As a member of the Secretaries' Council in Jerusalem, he promoted the idea of developing language institutions for multicultural setting of the Holy Land.

He has remained an active member of Christian Islamic Discussion Forum in Palestine and has also held membership in many other organizations:

The Jerusalem Christian Heritage Society

National Palestinian Committee Against Apartheid Wall

Palestinian Political Prisoners Solidarity Committee

Jerusalemite Handicapped Society, the Board of Trustees

General Secretariat of Ajjial Foundation.

The Palestine Committee at Al Quds University.

The World Vision International Foundation, Jerusalem Branch advisory committee

Secretaries' Council of Al Liqa' Traditional Studies Centre in the Holy Land

General Secretariat of the Christian schools in the Holy Land, representing the Orthodox church-

General Secretariat of the Al-Razi Foundation for Society and Culture, Jerusalem

Secretaries' Council of Faisal Al-Husseini Foundation in Jerusalem

General Secretariat of Bialara Foundation (the Palestinian organization for youth education in media)

Ilia' Social Development Association, Jerusalem

Friends of Children Society

Finally he also performed his role as a priest and preacher in St James Cathedral in Jerusalem.

On 1st of December 2005 he was unanimously elected by the Holy Synod of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem as Archbishop of Sebaste. On 24th of December 2005 his investiture was celebrated in the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.