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## **Is there a job waiting for senior high-school graduates?**

By Rev. Fr. Antonio Cecilio T. Pascual - February 1, 2019

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Among poor families, the graduation of a child from senior high school is a much-celebrated event. This is a blessing for the entire family because a senior high-school graduate is supposed to be prepared to join the ranks of the gainfully employed.

Which begs the question: Are the youth truly ready to be employed just after senior high school? Is there a career or a job waiting for them?

Senior high-school students in our country are being prepared by our education system for college and their respective careers. Most senior high-school students who graduate hope to find a job, especially those who come from poor families.

There is a 2018 study by the advocacy group Philippine Business for Education stating that even if most of the senior high-school students are ready to work, the market is not as prepared to receive or employ them. Only 20 percent of the 70 leading companies in the country are open to hiring these graduates.

The Philippine Institute for Development Studies also has a research on the country's senior high-school program, the graduates, as well as the hiring companies. Their research showed that many graduates are not satisfied with the jobs they get after graduating from senior high school. Companies, however, want to hire graduates armed with the skills the job market needs.

We still have so much to do to achieve the promise of the country's senior high-school program. However, the goal can only be achieved if the Department of Education and other stakeholders would find time to validate the results of studies made on the senior high-school program.

The senior high-school program was rolled out with the intention of making all graduates become productive and employable. But the DepEd alone can't make this program succeed. It needs the support of other stakeholders. Hiring companies must also trust the program, which needs all the support it can get from the private sector.

There are jobs waiting for senior high-school graduates, my brothers and sisters, if we organize the program so that the "strands" of the senior high-school program effectively prepare students to be competent and ready to work. That's the best way to get the support of the private companies, and that's also the way to make the job market open its doors to senior high-school graduates. Preparing our youth for the future is everyone's responsibility. The execution of our principle of "solidarity," according to the Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, is what we need because "we must have a strong and relentless determination to take action for the goodness of most, because we are responsible for the goodness of all.